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ABSTRACT

This booklet, one of 16 designed for use in an Open University Course on the education of handicapped children in the United Kingdom, focuses on ways in which a disability is affected by social factors. Effects of geographic, economic, and cultural conditions are examined. Clinical and sociological perspectives of mental retardation are compared in a discussion of the effects of others' perceptions on a person with a disability. Ways in which schools can contribute to students' educational problems are reviewed, issues of control and conformity addressed, and the nature of labels considered. A final section presents the view of a handicap as a personal event and suggests ways in which people can intervene in their own life and in the lives of others. Readings and activities are suggested throughout. (CL)

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E241 13

The Open University
Educational Studies: A Second Level Course
Special Needs in Education

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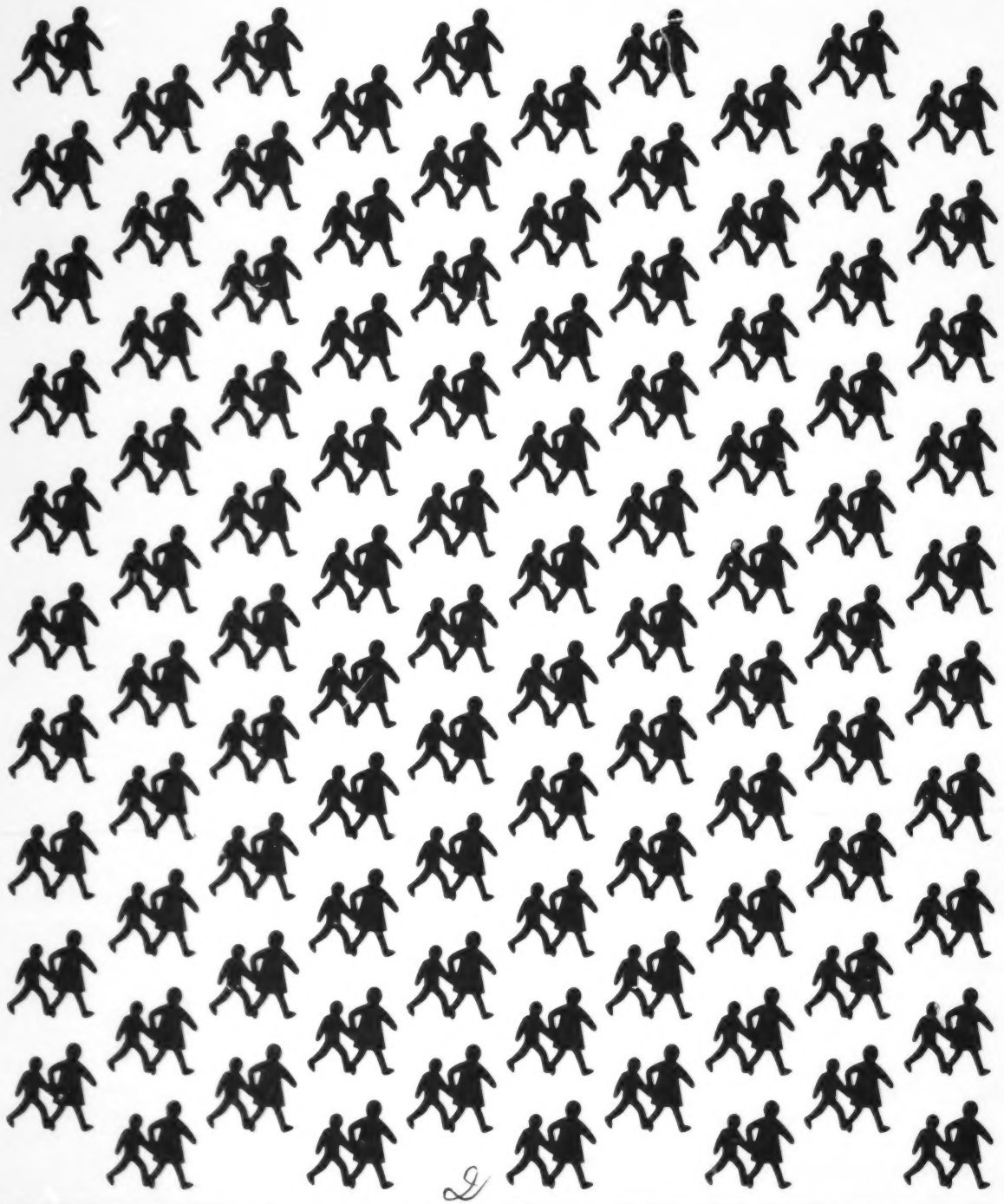
HANDICAP IS SOCIAL



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The Open University
Educational Studies: A Second Level Course
E241 Special Needs in Education

Unit 13
Handicap is social

Prepared by Tony Booth for the Course Team

The Open University Press

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Contents

	Note on reading	4
	Acknowledgements	4
1	**Introduction**	5
2	**Handicap and circumstance**	5
	Northern Ireland	6
	Handicaps of circumstance	8
	The summer of '81	9
3	**Accounting for handicap**	22
	Mental handicap: clinical and sociological perspectives	22
	What is mental handicap?	24
	The consequences of the clinical perspective	25
	A handicapped identity	25
	Understanding Down's Syndrome	27
	What is the handicap of Down's Syndrome?	30
	Clinical categories and placement	30
	Accounts of handicap	31
	Summary	32
4	**The production of failure and disaffection**	33
	What's wrong with schools?	33
	Is there a pupil critique of education?	35
	Criticizing schools and blaming teachers	35
	Conformity and control in education	36
	Learning what is taught	38
	Control by examination	38
	Differing perspectives	39
	Schooling the community	43
	Labels and destinations	44
	Transmitting the label	45
	Placing the label	46
	Disaffection and segregation; one process or two?	48
5	**Determinism and determination**	50
Appendix 1	**Becoming mentally handicapped**	53
Appendix 2	**A provocative case of over-achievement by a mongoloid**	54
	References	55

Note on reading

The set readings for this unit are to be found in:

SWANN, W. (ed.) (1981) *The Practice of Special Education*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell/The Open University Press. They are:

STEPHEN, F. (1891) 'Handicap in Northern Ireland: a special case?' (Reading 5.3).

MERCER, J. R. (1970) 'Sociological perspectives on mild mental retardation' (Reading 1.2).

BOOTH, T. A. (1978) 'From normal baby to handicapped child: unravelling the idea of subnormality in families of mentally handicapped children' (Reading 4.2; pp. 257–8 only).

The case studies for this unit are to be found in:

BOOTH, T. and STATHAM, J. (1982) *The Nature of Special Education*, London, Croom Helm/The Open University Press. They are:

'Doubly handicapped: disabled and poor' (Case study 18).

'Growing up in care' (Case study 28).

Acknowledgements

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Text

'Saturday Night Madness' in *Daily Mail*, 6 July 1981; 'Now it's a battle of words' and 'This was not a race war' in *Daily Mirror*, 6 July 1981; 'We had to battle the skinhead mob' in *Daily Express*, 6 July 1981; 'A detritus that won't go away' in *The Guardian*, 6 July 1981; 'There's even worse to come, says Enoch' in *Sun* 6 July 1981; 'Shock call to cops' in *Daily Star* 6 July 1981; 'Gas and guns "inevitable" police answer to riots' in *The Guardian* 7 July 1981; 'Toxteth "vigilantes" defy the looters' in *The Guardian* 7 July 1981; 'Home Secretary announces . . .' in *The Guardian*, 7 July 1981; 'Vandals move in at evacuated hospital' in *The Guardian*, 7 July 1981; 'Merseyside police chief . . .' in *The Guardian* 8 July 1981; 'Street tensions belie Scarman message of hope' in *The Sunday Times*, 29 November 1981; 'Crying out for action' in *The Sunday Times*, 29 November 1981; 'What the Scarman report recommended' in *The Sunday Times*, 29 November 1981; 'Why two blacks are wary of police' in *The Sunday Times*, 29 November 1981; 'Down's student fights to form union' in *The Guardian*, 30 November 1981; Grunsell, R. (1980) *Beyond Control?: Schools and Suspension*, Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 144 Camden High Street, London NW1; Bird, C. *et al* (1981) *Disaffected Pupils*, Educational Studies Dept. Brunel University; King, R. (1978) *All Things Bright and Beautiful*, John Wiley and Sons; 'Unemployed teenagers committed suicide' in *The Guardian* 17 December 1981; 'Headmaster disputes verdict on suicides' in *The Guardian* 29 August 1981; 'Suicide youth's brother gaoled for school arson' in *The Guardian* 28 August 1981; Campling, J. (ed.) (1981) *Images of Ourselves*, Routledge and Kegan Paul; Butterfield, E. C. (1961) 'A provocative case of overachievement by a mongoloid' in *American Journal of Mental Deficiency*, American Society of Mental Deficiency; Booth, T. (1978) 'From normal baby to handicapped child' in *Sociology*, 12, Journal of the British Sociological Association.

Illustrations

pp. 9 and 11 Mercury Press Agency; *p. 12* Express Newspapers; *pp. 15 and 19 The Guardian; p. 17* Press Association; *p. 20 The Sunday Times.*

1 *Introduction*

1.1 In this unit I want to portray the various ways in which handicap, considered as a personal burden or disadvantage, is a social creation. This applies to handicaps caused by circumstances, as well as to those with physical or mental origins. The extent to which physical impairment or intellectual incompetence is experienced as a handicap depends on the past and present attitudes, values and actions of the community. But, in calling handicap social, there are many things that I am not asserting. I am not denying the reality of physical incapacities, accidents, deformities, disease or pain. In painful conditions, where the link between the state of our bodies and our thoughts is most insistent, perhaps the strongest case can be made for talking of a purely physical handicap, though how we react to pain and whether treatment is available and given are products of social circumstance. Nor am I saying that children do not have real difficulties in schools or that teachers do not have real difficulties with children. Lastly, in arguing for its social nature I am not suggesting that handicap is created in a mechanical way by social forces beyond human control. Social forces and the institutions in which they operate are directed by people with the power to change them, so that change depends on who has or can obtain this power. In directing attention to the social causes and consequences of handicap we may be able to discover the means by and the extent to which handicaps can be transformed.

1.2 Some people have objected to our persistent use of the term 'handicap' in this course. There can be no doubt that it conveys a stigma. This was forcefully brought to my attention by a boy with Down's Syndrome who attended a church summer play-scheme. He was sent home one day for striking another child. Several weeks later he said to his mother, 'You know why I hit that girl, I hit her because she said I was handicapped.' I will argue that in the case of Down's Syndrome it is the stigma which is the primary handicap. Removing the stigma attached to the label, rather than merely avoiding or changing it, is the only way to remove the burden this child shouldered.

1.3 If we are to remove the stigma suffered by some people because of their deviant actions or appearance, we have to do more than change our minds, however difficult that might be. For the meaning we give to the actions of others affects what we do in concrete ways. If we see them as sick we may house them in hospitals. If we think of them as similar to each other we may place them all together. If we regard them as subnormal we may withhold employment from them. Handicaps are social in meaning and have physical and social consequences.

1.4 In the next section, I will look at the way the form and extent of a person's handicap depends on their geographical, economic and cultural circumstance. In section 3, I will explore accounts of handicap and examine attempts to define distinct clinical and sociological approaches. In section 4, I will examine the ways in which schools can contribute to educational difficulties. In the final section I will argue that handicap, while always being social, is also personal, and begin to consider the scope that people have for intervening in their own lives and in the lives of others.

2 *Handicap and circumstance*

2.1 In Unit 10 I concentrated on approaches to special education in developed countries. The range of handicaps produced and recognized within them which prompted educational reactions was broadly similar. I included photographs in that unit to point out the need to see that the handicaps suffered by children in Third World countries are radically different from our own. Poverty, malnutrition and disease are the overwhelmingly predominant handicaps in many Asian and African countries, which should determine how we place the needs we recognize in their children in order of importance.

2.2 The disparities between nations mirror the variations that occur within any particular nation over time. In the UK, within the last sixty years alone we have witnessed the virtual disappearance of polio and tuberculosis as producers of permanent or temporary disability. The advent of antibiotics and the changes in policies towards surgical intervention have brought about considerable changes in the survival rates of children with Down's Syndrome and spina bifida. Changes in public attitudes, spending and priorities have altered the meaning and nature of handicap.

2.3 Compared to Third World nations, the similarities in definition and treatment of handicap in the UK, Italy, Norway and the US are more salient than the differences. But the distinctions between these nations in national policy on the rights of the handicapped, as well as the nature of schools, families and communities, make the possession of handicap a cultural experience that is particular to each nation. Within each country, disparities of wealth and culture promote wide variations in special needs, even if this is not reflected in the official response to them.

2.4 Within the UK, the region, class and family into which a child is born affect whether she is born or will become handicapped, the educational difficulties she will experience and the quantity and quality of services she receives. This idea is hardly surprising or in need of elaboration, yet it was a fact which so startled the Government elected in 1979 that they suppressed a report which documented the inequalities in the distribution and adoption of health services (the Black Report, DHSS, 1980; also Davidson and Townsend, 1982). The profoundest and saddest area of deprivation in the UK is Northern Ireland where poverty and unemployment, as well as the obvious terrors and stresses, are at levels far higher than any other region. Mothers there have double the risk of giving birth to a child with congenital malformation compared to the average for England and Wales.

2.5 The degeneration of the inner cities struck the consciousness of the public through the media coverage of the conflicts involving police, people and property which reached a crescendo in the summer of 1981, and by the subsequent Scarman inquiry and report (Home Office, 1981; also Scarman, 1982). For a while attention was focused on the problem of youth unemployment and the lack of progress towards a harmonious, equitable, multiracial society. I have included some of the newspaper reports of that time to highlight the issues which affect the production of educational difficulties in schools and the circumstances in which policies for meeting the needs of children in our schools have to be developed. It is hard to predict the role such events will have in affecting the school experience of children with special needs during the life of this course. You may recall Robert Thornbury's depiction of educational chaos in the inner cities quoted in the article you read in Unit 1/2 (the Reader, Reading 5.1). When the riots occurred his arguments assumed greater significance.

2.6 Circumstances may contribute to the causation of handicap, as in the high incidence of congenital abnormalities in Northern Ireland. They may exacerbate handicap when access to public buildings is denied to the physically handicapped. They may also constitute the handicap as in the case of poverty. The case studies and newspaper reports which follow reflect these distinctions. I suggest you read through the sections on Northern Ireland and handicap of circumstance, then browse through the reports, their sequels and the images of 'The Summer of '81' at your leisure. Whom we regard as handicapped or in special need depends in part on whom we are willing to help, on our recognition of their burden. Do the children growing up in Northern Ireland or in Toxteth or in poverty or in care have special needs which we should acknowledge and try to overcome? I have not provided a conclusion to this section, for it is up to you to form your own.

Northern Ireland

Reading Now read 'Handicap in Northern Ireland: a special case?', Reading 5.3 in the Reader.

Comment (a) It is not Fiona Stephens' aim to discuss the effect of a long and bitter war on the lives of children in Northern Ireland. As you might suppose, the effects on children vary with their proximity to areas of conflict and experiences within them. The capacity

of people in Northern Ireland to create a sense of normality and meaning in their lives despite the conflict is quite remarkable and can surprise visitors to the province.

(b) Northern Ireland contains one and a half million people, a third of whom are Catholic. On the mainland, unemployment is much higher in the north than in the south. Unemployment in Northern Ireland is at an even higher level than in Scotland, and is three times the level of the south-east of England. Levels of income are the lowest and numbers in poor housing are the highest of any region in the UK.

(c) Education is organized on a different basis from the rest of the UK. Secondary education is still selective and, besides determining the nature of secondary schools, the 11+ assessment exerts a powerful control on the primary school curriculum. A recent report of the Northern Ireland inspectorate was highly critical of the over-emphasis of primary teaching on the three Rs. The inspectorate have been criticized in turn for failing to set the curriculum in context:

> It is disingenuous of the inspectors to deplore such practices without considering or at least mentioning the possibility that the procedures for transfer to secondary school, which incorporate only tests of limited aspects of children's attainments, may exert a powerful effect in structuring teachers' classroom practice. Teachers may feel that the three Rs must be stressed because their success or failure as teachers may be assessed by their rate of obtaining grammar school places for their charges: feelings that may be subtly or even crudely reinforced by parental expectations.
>
> (Sullivan and Marriott, 1981, p. 51)

In Northern Ireland, virtually all schools are denominational in effect; segregated education means education segregated by religion, Catholic or Protestant. In a review of 'segregated education and social conflict in Northern Ireland', Liz McWhirter (1981) reported a conversation she had with a head of a special school. They 'had been engaged in a lively discussion about the need for more research into integrated education in Northern Ireland for several minutes before [she] realized that he was talking about integrating the disabled and able bodied'. In looking at the effects on children of mixing with others from the other religious background she went into special schools where categorization by handicap overrides religious control. Fiona Stephen suggests that the churches regard the home as the proper place for handicapped children and are simply uninterested in their education. Fraser (1973) had surmised that children in special schools 'must be thought too stupid to be corrupted by integration'. The continuum of integration against which to assess progress of children with and without special needs in Northern Ireland is unique to that province.

(d) There was a suggestion in the article that the Church had to take a major responsibility for the relative backwardness of special education provision. Eamonn Dwyer of the Faculty of Education in Ulster Polytechnic argues that this implication of the article is misleading:

> The question to be asked is, 'Who is responsible for ensuring that adequate and appropriate provision is made available in the general field of social services?' The simple answer is the state. The state may or may not welcome and encourage the participation of voluntary bodies in fulfilling its obligations, but it has ultimate responsibility . . .
>
> The conclusion in the article about the negative influence of the churches on special education, particularly the Catholic Church, is without foundation in my opinion. It is absolutely correct that the Catholic Church is deeply involved in education and, although I would find a very great deal to criticize in some of the attitudes it holds and the policies it has adopted, I cannot agree that the situation special education finds itself in is the result of anything Catholic organizations say or do. Indeed, it is only necessary to look at the Catholic involvement in the education of handicapped children in the Republic of Ireland to be aware of an extensive commitment which the article claims does not exist. In other words the article has ignored, to use contemporary political terminology, the 'Irish dimension' and has therefore omitted an aspect of the historical context of the issue, which distorts the facts . . .
>
> The statement that 'nuns and clerics predominate in posts of responsibility as well as principalship' in Catholic schools is grossly inaccurate.

> In making these comments I would appear to be acting as an apologist for the Catholic Church. This is not my intention—I am merely responding to what I feel is a rather strong bias in the article.
>
> (Dwyer, 1982, personal communication)

(e) The reasons for the failure of the Government to implement change in education in Northern Ireland are complex. Whatever the difficulties, some issues are simply ignored. That the Government should have excluded Northern Ireland from the Warnock committee's brief is a lost opportunity. Radio 4 examines the reasons for the special position of severely mentally handicapped children in Northern Ireland. Will Swann has argued that the real barrier to bringing these children within education is now financial, though that was less of a problem in the relatively affluent sixties:

> Special care schools contain a sizeable number of people over school-leaving age. It is not uncommon to find particularly severely handicapped people over twenty in the same class as children under five. In the 1960s, adults and children were generally found in the same building. More recently, some new adult training centres have been built, but none of these has so far made any provision for multiply handicapped people. If the special care schools switched to education, where would these people go? Education authorities have no statutory responsibility for people over 19, and since there is already a dramatic shortfall of adult centre places, this group of adults would face either being at home all day, or being consigned to a subnormality hospital.
>
> Understandably, the parents of this group are hotly opposed to the transfer unless alternative provision is created, and they are backed by the local branch of MENCAP, which in turn receives financial assistance from the Northern Ireland DHSS. Parents of younger children are generally in favour of transfer: it is they who have recently suffered the indignity of certification and adulthood is still a long way off. But they find themselves dominated in many parents' groups by the more established and knowledgeable parents of older children, so what parent pressure there is for change is weak and uncoordinated and is certainly not backed by any powerful independent voices.
>
> (Swann, unpublished paper)

(f) The special circumstances of Northern Ireland do translate into harsh statistical facts on physical handicap and infant mortality. The incidence of spina bifida is the highest in the world. *You and Your Baby* argued that efforts towards the alleviation of extremes of poverty might make the biggest impact on these figures (DHSS, Northern Ireland, 1980). The scope for genetic counselling and prenatal screening emphasized by Fiona Stephen will be taken up again in the next unit.

Handicaps of circumstance

Reading Now read Case study 18, 'Doubly handicapped: disabled and poor', and Case study 28, 'Growing up in care'.

Comment (a) I will not comment in detail on these case studies. Each makes its central message quite clear. We have to decide whether we wish to take any notice of that message. The people working in children's homes have, arguably, the most important job in the social services, but have low status and income. Such jobs, therefore, are often filled by inexperienced temporary staff, which compounds the haphazard emotional experiences of children in the homes.

(b) Both case studies bring home to me the differences in meaning education has for children in different circumstances. The horizons and aspirations of the Nelson children and those in care may make the central ideology of education totally irrelevant. How are they supposed to discover or accept that schools are there to help you get on in life?

(c) Both these studies describe people who fall into two categories of disadvantage simultaneously. Such people emphasize the futility of pressing for the needs of one such category if these are met by withdrawing resources from another.

THE SUMMER OF '81

Daily Mail, Monday, July 6, 1981

Street violence hits Liverpool— with the police as number one target

Saturday night madness

ONCE again the streets are a battlefield. Once again come the blinding flashes of exploding petrol bombs. And again the police are the targets.

This was how, on Saturday night, the immigrant district of Toxteth in Liverpool joined Bristol, Brixton and Southall as areas shamed by violent riots. The policemen, huddled behind transparent shields, were retreating from bombs flung in Upper Parliament Street, a road scattered with the debris of rocks and burned-out vehicles.

Masks hid the faces of assailants as a hail of stones and jeers followed the police. One bomb exploded against a young constable's riot shield. Another flared in the gutter beside the retreating officers.

Mr Kenneth Oxford, Chief Constable of Merseyside, blamed the violence on 'black hooligans' hell bent on attacking the police. But he said, there had been no racial motivation behind the rioting.

One woman who watched terrified as the violence surged across the battered area agreed. She said: 'These madmen want to see the blood of policemen splattered across the streets of Liverpool. It is not race hate—it is vicious hatred of the police.' The solution she voiced in her fear and anger was stark indeed.... 'These yobs should be lined up against a wall and stoned until they plead for mercy.'

Among those injured was 34-year-old TV cameraman Neil Higginson, one of a BBC film crew chased by masked coloured youths wielding pickaxe handles. They wrecked his £12,000 camera and beat him to the ground with the handles. The camera was set on fire.

Mr Higginson, who needed hospital treatment, said later: 'It was terrifying. We were subjected to a frenzied attack. The youths warned us not to film. We agreed and turned to go but as we were leaving they charged after us and attacked.'

Yesterday morning a quarter mile stretch of Upper Parliament Street was littered with the burned out shells of about a dozen cars and vans hijacked by the mob. Rioters looted a wine store and an electrical suppliers. Witnesses said they saw youths carrying off washing machines and fridges into nearby flats. The electrical suppliers was then set ablaze along with a three-storey derelict house in the area.

For many decent people who live in the area, Toxteth has become a place of fear. They were right to be afraid. As one injured policeman said: 'You'd be a bloody fool if you weren't frightened'.

Picture by: JIM CLARKE

Dossier on the nights of violence that tore two troublespots

Now it's a battle of words

By ALISTAIR MARTIN

A WAR of words broke out yesterday in the wake of the Southall riot.

Police said Friday night's battle in West London wasn't the result of any sinister campaign by political groups.

"IT just happened," a local police sergeant said. "It was a spontaneous street fight on a very, very grand scale."

But Asian leaders challenged the police verdict on the riot. One community leader, Adult Rai, declared: "The key to it all is that the police fail to defend the local community when skinheads come into the area.

"We have relied on so-called law and order long enough and it has let our people down. The police don't prevent muggings and beatings

"It got to the stage when the protection had to be done by the people."

SOUTHALL

The trouble started after coachloads of skinheads from East London drove to Southall for a concert by a group called The Four Skins at the Hambrough Tavern.

Hundreds of Asians took to the streets as word of the invasion got around.

Scores of people were hurt in the fighting and fire-bombing that followed.

A Police segeant who was in the front line during the rampage said: "The skinheads probably did come here just for the concert.

"There are always incidents when they come to Southall but this time there was one which for the locals was the final straw.

"A popular woman shopkeeper was attacked by a few skinheads. Her family fought back and the skinheads and Asians in the area simply went to the defence of their own.

"No one set out to start what happened."

Police have interviewed the coach party organisers and have no evidence that the trip was planned to stir up trouble deliberately.

But Asian leaders said yesterday that the skinheads WERE politically motivated and their actions amounted to "a pogrom against Asians."

'This was not a race war. It was blacks versus the police'

TOXTETH

BLACKS who rampaged through the Toxteth area of Liverpool at the weekend had just one target — the police.

Merseyside Chief Constable Ken Oxford said yesterday: "There is no confrontation between black and white. If there is a confrontation, it is between blacks and police."

While the riots had been organised by blacks, he said there was "an element of criminal whites to take the pickings."

Mr Oxford spoke as a big clean-up operation began to clear the rubble from the city's main coloured quarter.

He said: "I have no doubt at all that this is not a racial issue as such.

"It's exclusively a crowd of black hooligans intent on making life unbearable and indulging in criminal activity."

He warned: "They cannot win. That is my message to them.

By STEVE CROWTHER and MAURICE CHESWORTH

"I am not going to allow a no-go area or to withdraw police presence. I would be failing in my duty and putting at risk the civilised people in the area.

"I find it sad because ethnic groups have been in Liverpool for a long time. We have a happy and healthy relationship with these various groups."

Merseyside's Deputy Chief Constable Peter Wright said he believed the riot had been a "deliberately orchestrated" attack on the police.

Grievance

He added: "When the police arrived there was a body of people waiting for them."

An immigrant leader laid the blame for the riots firmly on the police.

West Indian community spokesman John Arboine said: "The trouble was the climax to the community's irritation over the number of police in the area.

"Young blacks have been constantly stopped and not treated like human beings.

"It has now escalated to the point where they have lost faith in the police and authority."

Toxteth MP Dick Crawshaw said: "There are factions in this city who will do anything to hit at law and order. The coloured community are being used.

"The blacks have an extra sense of grievance because of poor housing conditions and unemployment.

"This is a tragic day for Liverpool. I am horrified at the destruction I have seen."

Edge Hill MP David Alton said the riot was "diabolical". He added: "We should try to overcome the tragedy of Toxteth."

THE FRONT LINE: Youths hurl missiles as the massed ranks of police advance behind their riot shields.

THE CASUALTY:
An injured policeman is helped away from the battle.

THE AFTERMATH:
Burned-out vehicles littering a Toxteth street yesterday.

'We had to battle the skinhead mob'

SOUTHALL

By IAN BLACK

THE PEOPLE of Southall were clearing up yesterday after their worst night of violence for years.

Burnt out vehicles littered the streets.

The flame - scarred pub where fire bombers struck was boarded up.

But the predominantly Asian community in West London knew that some scars would take longer to heal.

Mrs Nirmal Kalhan, 44, of the Maharajah greengrocers shop was attacked by a skinhead girl on Friday's riot night.

The girl grabbed her arm and shouted : "What are you people doing in this country ? You bloody Indian."

Mrs Kalhan said : "It was very frightening. This girl had two men with her and was pulling at my sari."

It was intimidation like this even before the riot began, which led Asian leaders yesterday to complain of a "pogrom" against them.

Punk

They want Home Secretary Mr William Whitelaw to order a judicial inquiry.

A race clash in 1979 in which New Zealand teacher Blair Peach was killed is still fresh in everyone's mind.

An estimated 450 East London skinheads arrived at Southall's Hambrough Tavern on Friday night where a punk rock concert was being held.

The Pakistan Welfare Association in Southall claimed last night that the violence was part of a well-planned conspiracy by racists to create trouble in the area.

But there is no doubt that the fighting started in the pub's disco.

Yesterday in the burnt out remains of the Hambrough Tavern, where £100,000-worth of damage was done, one of the barmen described what happened.

He asked that his name should not be published.

"Fighting broke out in the disco at about 9.30," he said.

"Skinhead girls were fighting other skinhead girls, and skinheads were also battling each other.

"But a crowd of around 1,000 Asians were gathering outside the pub, on the Broadway, and yelling and taunting the people inside."

The worst of the night's violence started however when the police tried to move the Asian group away.

The youngsters—many of them middle-class, educated people from good families—openly admit taking the law into their own hands.

Burning vehicles and the riot-hit pub

"We wanted to get at these skinheads," said one.

"We knew they came from the National Front and we did not want them in Southall."

He described how gangs of Asians grabbed empty milk bottles and crossed to a petrol station over the road.

"We just went to the pumps and filled up the bottles. Everyone knows how to make a Molotov cocktail these days — they've seen how it's done on television."

Within minutes — at about 9.45, blazing petrol bombs were being hurled at the windows of the two-storey pub.

The building was quickly ablaze and people fled into the street where hand-to-hand battles began.

By 11 o'clock the police had closed off the Broadway, making it a "no-go" area. The fighting continued till after midnight leaving 87 policemen injured and 28 civilians — including two ambulancemen.

Smashed

The Indian Overseas Association in Great Britain and the United Asian Committee criticised the police for failing to prevent the clash.

Deputy Assistant Commissioner George Rushbrook said however that although they had been tipped off they were sent to Greenford, a mile away.

A West Indian youth and two Asian men were arrested on Saturday night following more violence but a Scotland Yard spokesman said it was "nothing like as bad."

Windows were smashed and "one or two" bottles and bricks were hurled at police in clashes mostly centred around the Broadway.

There was also an unsuccessful attempt to ignite a do-it-yourself shop with a lighted rag soaked in petrol.

A detritus that won't wash away

Suddenly, it has become commonplace. Bristol, then Brixton; Southall on Friday; now Liverpool, Toxteth. What was once an outrageous aberration has become a familiar spectacle. Smashed windows, looted shops, terrorised local inhabitants, burning cars, buildings on fire, policemen rolling over and over to extinguish the flames on their tunics and hair, petrol bombs, flying bricks, the ranks of incongruous British bobbies trembling behind their riot shields, hopelessly ill-equipped, both mentally and physically, for the hatred that confronts them. After the violence, the rituals begin: it was all organised by extremist elements (the police); it was a legitimate explosion of pent-up frustration (the West Indian community); it was a legitimate act of self-defence (the Asian community); more encouragement for voluntary repatriation (Mr John Stokes, MP); a serious year but not a cause for despair (Mr David Lane, Commission for Racial Equality).

This last, distressing weekend starkly illuminates the two distinct but related faces of racial tension in Britain. Mr Edward Heath, in his speech last week, hardly needed much power of prophecy to warn of the disastrous impact of high unemployment on the social fabric. But he only painted half the picture. Unemployment among young blacks, he said, was bound to lead to an increase in racial tension. This is undoubtedly so; but racial tension does not solely consist of young blacks on the rampage. Economic adversity breeds racial hatred among young whites, and this is what was so clearly on display in Southall at the weekend.

For all their ugliness, the disturbances in Liverpool, like those in Brixton and in Bristol, were not race riots as such. They were confrontations between black youngsters and the police. They should not be confused with the disturbances in Southall, where Asians were the victims of neo-fascist violence and defended themselves against it in the most effective way they knew. Toxteth and Southall are different manifestations of the same underlying disease: high unemployment and social decay, exacerbated by the virulent infection of racism. In Southall, it was the white youngsters who, at the sharp end of Britain's decline, have swallowed the racialist slander of the neo-fascist groups and who, consequently, chose to victimise the Asian community. In Toxteth, it was the black youngsters who are at the very bottom of that social heap, for whom racialist attitudes have tightened the screw of unemployment, and who, consequently, vented their hatred upon white authority in the shape of the police.

To explain is not to excuse. There can be no justification for throwing Molotov cocktails or driving hi-jacked vans into police lines, for stoning passing cars driven by innocent members of the public, for beating people to the ground with pick-axe handles — all vicious features of the Toxteth riots. But the hostility between young blacks and the police is by now so familiar as hardly to need further explanation; the cycle of black alienation and insensitive policing, now being rehearsed at the Scarman inquiry, is well-known. Community leaders in Toxteth say they have warned for months that this might happen. What is needed is the will to translate all this knowledge into positive, preventive action.

What happened in Southall, however, is, if anything, even more worrying. It seems that coachloads of skinheads were brought in from the East End of London, ostensibly to attend a rock concert at a Southall pub but with the underlying intention of wrecking the area. Their intentions were plain from the racialist slogans on the coaches. The Asian community defended itself; by the time the police actually arrived on the scene in any strength, the pub was under siege and they were obliged, in the attempt to keep the two sides apart, to protect the skinheads from attack. Thus the stereotype of the police as defenders of fascists was perpetuated into the annals of mythology. But the police reaction to the event was disturbing in the extreme. Coach-loads of skinheads, well-known recruiting targets of the neo-fascists, were being brought into the heart of Southall; yet the police were elsewhere. At the very least, this is incompetence on a pretty grand scale. The police cannot be expected to resolve the problems of the decaying inner-cities all by themselves, but they should possess sufficient knowledge of events to keep the peace.

Mr David Lane has now called for a tightening up of the Public Order Act. Certainly, it seems that the customary hand-wringing over the incursions into freedom of speech that would result from any such change in the law has to stop. For what happened in Southall was by no means an isolated or even unpredictable incident. The National Front, the British Movement and other neo-fascist groups have long been distributing their literature and conducting recruiting campaigns in our schools.

Politicians who deplore the hardly-disguised incitement and venom of such literature complain that prosecutions are difficult because of the loose wording of the law. It is high time that wording was changed. For the number of racialist attacks has now reached alarming proportions. The Home Office is currently conducting an inquiry into these attacks; the disturbances of last weekend have given its deliberations an added urgency. Of particular concern is the apparent indifference of the police when these attacks take place, and their stubborn refusal to recognise any racialist motive behind them. Time and again, the police are slow to ascribe racialist motives to assaults on peaceful, law-abiding coloured people. Their attitude must change if this dangerous gulf between them and the Asian and West Indian community is to be narrowed.

But the police are not the cause of the problem; nor, for all their evil, are the fascists. The cause is a society which remorselessly throws more and more of its young people, black and white, on to the scrap heap, fostering resentment and creating conditions for intolerance to flourish. Until this government changes that direction, all the Scarmans, Home Office inquiries and public order acts will be in vain.

There's even worse to come, says Enoch

By WALTER TERRY and PETER ROSE

ENOCH Powell repeated his warning over race hate yesterday: "Britain has seen nothing yet."

Thirteen years after his "rivers of blood" speech predicting racial violence on city streets, he said:

"I would simply draw attention to my observations following the Brixton riots 12 weeks ago: 'You have seen nothing yet.'

BRICKS

"I think that is about as apt as one can come. Everyone who read it understands perfectly well what I mean."

Tory hard-liner Teddy Taylor called for the introduction of powerful water cannon to soak the hooligans. He said: "We can't allow our policemen to be made the Aunt Sally — being called in only to have petrol bombs thrown at them. One day a policeman will be burned alive."

Right-wing Tory John Stokes urged police to act with "ruthlessness" against the rioters.

EXTREMISTS

Liverpool city council leader Sir Trevor Jones said: "There was nothing racial about the Toxteth riot. "Black and white were fighting side by side.

Tory MP Harvey Proctor demanded an end to "lunatic" immigration

● EXPERTS called in by the Home Office after the Brixton riots are recommending that police should be given clothing and equipment to protect them from petrol bombs.

Shock call to cops; Let the rioters go free

THE Left-wing leader of Greater London Council, Ken Livingstone, has attacked the police for their handling of Friday night's race riot in Southall.

Reporting team at Southall

IAN BRANDES, PAUL HENDERSON, MARTIN LINTON and JAMES NICHOLSON

He told a packed meeting of cheering Asians that the Asian youths arrested during the disturbances had been "fighting to defend their community."

And he received wild applause when he called for the release of the rioters.

Erupted

"We want to know why the police took 45 minutes to arrive at the trouble spot, and why, when they got there, their sole aim was to defend the racists," he said.

"More and more the police are developing into a political role. They should be accountable to elected representatives, and should reflect the community they are supposed to serve."

Mr. Livingstone was speaking at the Dominion Cinema in Southall, 24 hours after the riot between Asians and skinheads erupted at a nearby pub

But there was trouble at the meeting when young Asians clashed with community leaders and demanded "Action, not words."

Fighting broke out and several hecklers were ejected.

The skinhead who organised the pub concert that led to the violence said yesterday: "The last thing we wanted was a fight."

Petticoat Lane boutique owner Mick French denied that Right-wing extremists were behind the trouble.

"We are loyalists but we are not in the National Front or any other similar group.

"It's nonsense to say we had weapons and swastikas and things.

But a barman at the Hambrough Tavern — standing in the wreckage of the burnt-out pub — said swastika - decked skinheads started trouble even before they got to the concert.

Meanwhile, young Asians last night accused the police of protecting the skinhead thugs.

And 5ft. 2in. machine builder Narotam Lal 32, is to make an official complaint about the police.

He claims he was clubbed to the ground by officers wielding truncheons although he was taking no part in the rioting.

THE GUARDIAN Tuesday July 7 1981

In the aftermath of the violence Guardian reporters examine what happened, how the police coped, and some of the underlying frustrations that led to whites and blacks taking to the streets to riot

Gas and guns 'inevitable' police answer to riots

By Gareth Parry

THE Toxteth riots, in which the police suffered 255 casualties, have now called into serious question the efficacy of two basic precepts of British policing in one of its most difficult roles, that of holding public order.

Already that traditional mainstay, "inaction" seems to have cracked. Officers faced a level of violence and brutality well beyond their experience.

But the use of CS gas for the first time during street rioting in mainland Britain was seen by some yesterday as an inexorable step towards the everyday arming of the police.

Mr Eldon Griffiths, parliamentary spokesman for the Police Federation, said yesterday that he believed that the issue of guns to police in a riot was almost inevitably the next step down the road to what few, and in particular the officers themselves, want.

Armed police on the streets of Britain have not just suddenly arrived. But they are here to stay. Their acceptance, initially in "special emergency" circumstances, has come in the same seemingly piecemeal way as the issue of riot batons, shields and visors as defensive armoury.

The issue and use of the temporarily blinding and disabling CS gas, used so effectively in Northern Ireland for mob dispersal, is still governed by a statement by the then Home Secretary on July 20, 1965. It said, specifically that CS smoke (sic) was "for use in dealing with armed criminals or violently insane persons in buildings from which they cannot be dislodged without danger of loss of life."

The statement, by Sir Frank Soskice, said definitely: "The tear smoke would not be used in any other circumstances."

Mr Leon Brittan, the then Minister of State at the Home Office, referred to the Soskice statement as an authority in a parliamentary answer on July 28, 1980, when he was asked about Government policy involving the use of CS gas, after a siege in which a CS pellet was fired.

Mr Brittan confirmed that "CS gas equipment has been held by all police forces since the mid-sixties." And, having quoted the 1965 statement as the prevailing Government policy towards CS, he went on to answer a number of supplementary questions thus:

"The number of officers trained in the use of the equipment and the way in which they are trained are operational matters for individual chief officers of police; but the general practice is that equipment would be used only by officers who have received specialised training. . . ."

But despite the Soskice and Brittan statements, the use of CS gas in the streets of Toxteth, Liverpool was apparently brought into play on the authority of the Chief Constable, Mr Kenneth Oxford.

This was confirmed by the Home Secretary, Mr Whitelaw, in a Commons statement on Toxteth yesterday: "In the circumstances of Sunday night the Chief Constable of Merseyside had no alternative to using CS Gas. Distasteful though this was to him and to me I believe he was totally right in that decision.

"In the light of the new

ferocity of the violence, I have decided that better and protective headgear and fire-resistant clothing must be available to the police. And steps will now be taken, with police authorities, to this end. The working group which I set up after the Brixton disorders will carry these decisions forward."

The use of plastic bullets by police to quell rioters was not ruled out last night by Mr Whitelaw, at a meeting of Conservative backbenchers in the Commons.

But he warned the Conservative Home Affairs committee of MPs that there were difficulties with the use of plastic bullets. They could accidentally kill.

Mr Griffiths, a vociferous champion of police rights, nevertheless said yesterday that he regretted an atmosphere which generated a feeling towards the arming of the police becoming as routine as it already was on the Continent and in the United States.

The police resorted to CS gas in answer to an onslaught of bricks, stones and fire bombs—a regular part of such violence. Mr Griffiths said the police should now, as a matter of urgency, be equipped with flame-proof shields.

Some of this equipment is already in use in very limited quantities, and it is, somewhat unsatisfactorily, passed around from police area to police area as needs arise. Given the sudden onset of rioting this system clearly fails more often than it succeeds, and it was a common sight at Toxteth to see police carrying ordinary shields upon which the fire-bombs clung.

A working party at the Home Office, to which Mr Whitelaw referred, will now be under extreme pressure to take quick action but Mr Griffiths pointed to another of the problems in re-equipping the police. "As soon as they get into riot uniforms they will become more alienated to the public.

Mr Griffiths said yesterday that, apart from being able to protect themselves, the police need some sort of equipment which would "enable them to advance."

Mr Griffiths last night called for advice to be sought from the Royal Ulster Constabulary in dealing with riots.

He said: "It is clear that in Brixton and Southall, and possibly in Toxteth, senior commanders have no training or tactical experience. We happen to have the most experienced riot police in the world in the Royal Ulster Constabulary and their advice should be sought."

Passers-by hardly glance at a fireman hosing down a burned-out building in Lodge Lane.

Problem of black and young jobless

WRY comics in Liverpool joke that the dole queue is one of the two expanding industries in the city. The other is for security men to guard the empty factories.

More than one in six are now out of work in the city — more than at any time since the war.

In the rundown area of Toxteth, the number of unemployed was put at 37 per cent by a city council survey last year.

Other estimates paint a much more dismal picture. A recent Liverpool University report on the Liverpool 8 district, which includes Toxteth, put white unemployment at 43 per cent and black at 47 per cent.

In its 1980 report Merseyside Community Relations Committee said that half the black people in the city were out of work, while a House of Commons sub-committee was told earlier this year that 60 per cent of black youths were unemployed.

It was no coincidence that the TUC chose Liverpool as the starting point of the recent People's March for obs.

The latest unemployment figures show more than 81,000 people chasing 1,019 jobs. At the careers office, with thousands of school-leavers looking for work, there are 12 jobs.

The recession has hit the once prosperous city especially hard. Mr Phil Parry, of the local employment office, said: "We have large firms closing down or shedding labour and only small ones starting up. It's a never-ending battle which just gets worse."

Riot zone inhabitants claim they were left unprotected • 45 police are still in hospital • shopkeepers unite

Toxteth 'vigilantes' defy the looters

By Michael Morris
and Malcolm Pithers

Residents at Toxteth, Liverpool, who felt unprotected by police during Sunday night's riots, have formed vigilante groups to protect themselves and their property.

Alan Geddes and a dozen club-wielding regulars kept an all night vigil outside the Croxteth Arms as hundreds of bottle and brick-throwing youths stormed police. Yesterday the pub in Lodge Lane was one of the few buildings which remained undamaged.

Not a window was broken as Mr Geddes, aged 36, and his customers kept watch over premises from closing time until dawn during the height of the riots.

"It was like a bloody war," he said. "I've never witnessed anything like it in my life and hope I never do again.

"I had to protect my pub — it's my livelihood. These looters and gangs of thugs are not going to get at my pub. Some of the customers who are close friends decided to help me.

"I was sick at what was happening. The adrenalin was pumping and if anyone had tried to break in they would have been in trouble. I will do the same again to protect my pub."

Mr Geddes refused to name his squad of helpers for fear of retribution against them. "But I don't mind being named. they won't get past me," he said.

He has sent his children—two teenage boys and two girls—to stay with relatives. They were one of many families evacuated by police during the smoke-filled night as the battle became worse.

At the height of the violence women were screaming and yelling at the rioters, telling them that there were children living in property above some of the shops, but their shouts were ignored.

Don McKinley, who runs a local cafe, stood his ground outside the property all night and confronted the looters.

"The looters moved into the top of the road and just worked their way down. We all banded together to try and stop them. We had no option," he said. The shopkeepers picked up sticks, brushes, and anything else they could use to protect themselves.

"One chap was frantically trying to get his stuff out of his shop, but while he was away they moved in. So we all grouped together to try and stand up to them. We had an assortment of weapons just because we felt so vulnerable. We expected the worst. The police were not here because they were fighting the battle.

"It was touch and go as to whether there was any real violence against us because they didn't like anyone confronting them. The looters were all ages, and both black and white children were involved. I saw whole families looting shops."

One of the worst-hit businesses is owned by two local men, George Bragg and John Harrison. The riots caused an estimated £500,000 worth of damage and may now put the jobs of the 12 people employed there at risk.

Mr Harrison had to stand by and watch his electrical supply store burn to the ground because the fire brigade could not reach it. He said: "We got here about six o'clock in the morning and discovered they had broken into the office and started a fire. It was only a small blaze at first and if the fire brigade had got through the place could have been saved.

"We are both local people and this makes you think of packing in and moving somewhere else in the city.

A total of 185 police officers were injured between Sunday night and Monday morning. Forty-five of them were still in hospital yesterday, one with a fractured skull.

By last night there had been 70 arrests for looting and other public order offences, some of them dealt with by the city magistrates yesterday.

At the height of the trouble about 800 policemen from four forces were at the scene, facing about 500 rioters.

Some of the police officers who were seriously injured in the riots spoke from their hospital beds about the ordeal. All of them said that the rioters were clearly organised and that the ringleaders appeared to be youngish men who were masked.

PC Paul Martin, aged 25, underwent an emergency operation to wire together pieces of a shattered bone on the side of his skull. He also suffered a fractured jaw and a deep gash over his left eye.

"I have never known anything like it," he said. "It was very frightening, of course. I thought at one point I was going to die."

PC Martin was hit on the head by a brick soon after he arrived at the scene. Seven hours later a slab of concrete ripped his protective helmet and visor.

"I remember the concrete coming towards me and then I hit the floor. The next thing I remember is being put into an ambulance," he said.

PC John Hanson said the crowd seemed to go berserk. "They drove a fire engine at us to try and break the line. All I remember is seeing a missile being thrown. Then I came to and my colleagues were dragging me away."

PC John Webb, aged 24, said he had to jump for his life when some of the rioters drove a stolen car towards him. "They set the cars going and aimed them at the police, sometimes jamming the accelerator pedal and then jumping out of the way." PC Webb suffered head and neck injuries.

Home Secretary announces better protection for police but says there can be no excuse for violence

Liverpool's blitz: An aerial picture captures the destruction caused by the Toxteth riots in Upper Parliament Street. The Rialto building is seen smouldering beside the shell of the Nat West Bank after two nights of what Mr Whitelaw, the Home Secretary, described as extraordinary ferocity. Yesterday a cleaning up operation started in the area and 70 people appeared in court including a 13-year-old girl accused of arson and a 15-year-old girl accused of hitting a policeman with a brick. Other charges included being in possession of petrol bombs and Molotov cocktails

Vandals move in at evacuated hospital

By David Hencke

LOOTERS broke into and vandalised an old people's hospital in Toxteth yesterday only hours after the hospital had been evacuated because of the rioting.

Liverpool Area Health Authority said that Princes Park hospital was severely damaged shortly after taxi drivers had evacuated its 90 patients. Hospital authorities found that protective boarding had been torn off windows and doors and old peoples belongings had been stolen from their lockers.

The thefts followed a night in which the health authority had great difficulty in maintaining its services. But over 260 people were treated and 107 old people evacuated to eight other hospitals in the city. Most were from the Princes Park hospital but a small number were evacuated from St Joseph's Hospice, which was threatened during the riots.

Health authorities were also unable to respond to telephone calls from pregnant mothers and people suffering heart attacks in the city. A spokesman said that there were "screaming mothers on the telephone, begging for treatment." But ambulances were unable to get through to Toxteth because the area had been sealed off.

Mr Albert Guiney, Merseyside's chief ambulance officer, said: "A young baby was choking and yet we couldn't get near it. One woman was screaming down the phone for an ambulance after her child was injured, but we couldn't get there."

Liverpool hospitals were unable to cope with emergency road accidents and patients were being taken to Chester or Southport.

A cyclist picks his way through the devastation in Toxteth, yesterday after the rioting.

Merseyside police chief attacks parents over children's 'uncivilised rampage'

By Malcolm Pithers

The Chief Constable of Merseyside, Mr Ken Oxford, yesterday vehemently attacked irresponsible parents who allowed their children to go on what he called an uncivilised rampage during the Toxteth riots.

He also issued a clear directive that unless there was a return to some basic, old-fashioned civilised discipline, and parents picked up their responsibilities, his force would do it for them.

Mr Oxford, speaking at a press conference in his force's headquarters, was obviously disturbed by the high numbers of young people who participated in the riots. Early yesterday morning 21 juveniles were arrested for looting, breaking shop windows and throwing petrol bombs.

Two of these were girls, and the ages ranged between eight and 16 years A further 46 adults were arrested during the early hours yesterday.

Mr Oxford praised the leaders of the ethnic communities in what he called the Toxteth triangle who had, he said, acted responsibly and had done what had been asked of them.

But he then turned his attention towards local parents — particularly those near the Park Road area, which is almost a mile from the earlier outbreaks of violence — and stressed that all the young people involved in the disturbances there late on Monday and early yesterday were white.

Mr Oxford said that there was a crowd of over 100 "thieves and vagabonds" in the Park Road area. He said: "I think it is a disturbing fact that no less than 21 juveniles were arrested at midnight last night for theft, looting, and heaving petrol bombs about.

"What in the name of goodness are these young people doing on the streets indulging in this behaviour at that time of night?"

"Is there no discipline that can be brought to bear on these people? Are the parents not interest in the futures of these young people?" he asked.

Mr Oxford said that there was a great deal of criticism about the levels of policing in the area that had to be applied. But he added: "If the parents are not going to pick up their responsibility and apply a discipline, it means that I have got to do it to protect the community at large.

"I think it is absolutely reprehensible that a young girl of 10 years of age is arrested in this situation."

He said the police were around 2,000 strong throughout the Toxteth area, in order to keep the situation cool.

He added: "Young people are great apeists. They see on television and in newspapers, photographs of people who indulge in urban terrorism and guerrilla warfare, wear balaclavas, and the kids are great copyists."

Mr Oxford said there was no "hard" evidene to suggest that the riots had been carefully organised, but this was being considered by the police.

He said he did not believe that the Army should either be placed on standby or called in. "That is almost an admission of failure," he said. "We have not got into that situation yet.

"I am quite confident that the civil police forces are capable of dealing with the situation."

Mr Oxford said there was no question of the police being withdrawn. "I do not agree there has ever been over-policing. There have to be determined, positive policing in these areas where people are hellbent on breaking the criminal law."

● One of the policemen injured in the Toxteth riots, Police Constable Francis Robert Palmer, who is in his twenties, was last night said to be ill but comfortable in Walton Hospital, Liverpool after undergoing a neuro-surgical operation.

PC Palmer suffered severe head wounds on Sunday night. Yesterday's operation was to remove a blood clot.

THE SUNDAY TIMES, 29 NOVEMBER 1981

Street tensions belie Scarman message of hope

Unemployment and crime grow since the riots

A special report by Elizabeth Grice and John Shirley

THE ONLY honorary member of the Brixton Domino and Social Club, proudly wearing his blue-and-white striped club tie, stepped on to the rostrum at Church House, Westminster, at precisely 12.33 last Wednesday afternoon to answer questions on his report into April's Brixton riots. Lord Scarman, of Quatt in the county of Salop, was quite clearly in ebullient mood.

He gave a 10-second countdown for photographers, announced "blast-off time" and turned enthusiastically to his audience of 100 (all white) journalists.

As he did so, a young black man named Michael Bailey lay slumped in his cell in the remand wing of Brixton Prison. It was Bailey, 19, British-born and unemployed, who was at the centre of the incident on April 10 which unleashed violence and disorder "the like of which," said Scarman, "had not previously been seen in this century in Britain."

Police had stopped Bailey in central Brixton. He was bleeding profusely from a four-inch stab wound. Black onlookers said they thought the police "were trying to kill him" and he was dragged from the police car and spirited to hospital. In the confusion, a minor riot broke out—and more followed.

The Bailey incident, though small in itself, crystallised the antagonism between the police and young blacks in Brixton. The same antagonism sparked off further outbreaks in Brixton on the following two nights, and rioting at Toxteth in Liverpool and Moss Side in Manchester three months later.

In these inner-city areas today, that antagonism is even more rife and a whole range of social and economic ills, identified by Scarman as the underlying causes of the riots, have intensified.

● Relations between the police and community leaders have *not* improved, despite cautious attempts on both sides to repair the breach of mistrust.

● The level of street crime has continued to rise. Indeed, it has become more violent and sinister since the riots.

● Unemployment and social deprivation, especially among young blacks, have risen dramatically in all areas.

● Worrying divisions have emerged within the black communities over their attitude towards the police and white society as a whole.

The black community's deep-rooted suspicion of the police has hampered attempts at reconciliation in the Brixton area. Three weeks ago, Lambeth's Council for Community Relations boycotted a meeting called by the local police chief to set up a new joint liaison committee and has still not decided whether to take part. (It will have to if Scarman's recommendation that such liaising bodies become statutory is accepted by the government.)

George Greaves, Lambeth's principal community relations officer, said last week: "We could meet and have glasses of beer and discuss five-a-side football matches. But unless the police treat the community as equal partners, the whole thing will simply be a public-relations exercise. What's the point?"

The increase in street crime serves only to worsen the atmosphere for reconciliation. Although the Metropolitan Police have stopped issuing official figures, senior officers claim privately that street crime in Brixton has doubled since the riots. It has also become more organised. At least three separate gangs, each including eight or nine black youngsters, are terrorising shopkeepers in Atlantic Road by walking in en masse and clearing out the stock.

Astel Parkinson, the moderate chairman of Lambeth's community relations council, said gloomily last week: "After the riots, black parents stopped their children coming out. But now the curfew has been lifted. The youngsters are back again and the area is once again open for conflict. Young blacks have taken their fate into their own, potentially violent hands."

In Toxteth there is what one community worker described last week as "a more or less constant level of skirmish on the streets." Police estimate their foot patrols face on average three attacks a week, often by black youths armed with knives. Recently, three officers were so savagely beaten up that one man went to hospital with a broken jaw. Another was kicked "like a human football" in the gutter by a mob of 20 youths.

Unemployment in all three areas has continued to increase. Latest figures suggest that 53 per cent of Brixton's black youngsters under 19 are now out of work. In Moss Side, the October register shows that of 1,543 young people out of work, 61 per cent are black. When Scarman asked for the figures back in April, the youth employment total was 961, only 17 per cent of them black.

But social service expenditure has gone up, too. Scarman pointedly refers to Lambeth council's social service spending as "the highest in the country." In 1979/80, it stood at £117.39 per head of population. Latest figures show that for the 1980/81 year, the cost had jumped to £122.20 per capita — despite government cutbacks.

There are signs that divisions within the black community itself may frustrate attempts by both sides to get together. Earlier this month, the Moss Side Defence Committee denounced as "deeply biased and distorted" the report of the unofficial inquiry into the Manchester riots chaired by Benet Hytner QC—an inquiry that black leaders had demanded and which James Anderton, Manchester's chief constable, boycotted.

The divisions have become even more apparent in Toxteth. Last month a group of older blacks unhappy about the outspoken manner of their colleagues tried to oust Wally Brown, an articulate Liverpool-born black, from his position as chairman of Merseyside Community Relations Council. They failed, but only just. There was a dead heat in the secret ballot and Brown scraped home on a show of hands at the vital meeting. But his deputy, Rasheed Mufti, a leading member of the Liverpool 8 Defence Committee, was defeated.

In Toxteth, Margaret Simey, the outspoken chief of the Merseyside Police Authority, has fought a behind-the-scenes campaign to protect Chief Constable Kenneth Oxford, who ordered CS gas to be fired during riots in Upper Parliament Street in July.

A member of the police authority said: "She could have had his head on a platter. She has actually tried to keep him on. She didn't want the mob to think they could get a reward like that for rioting."

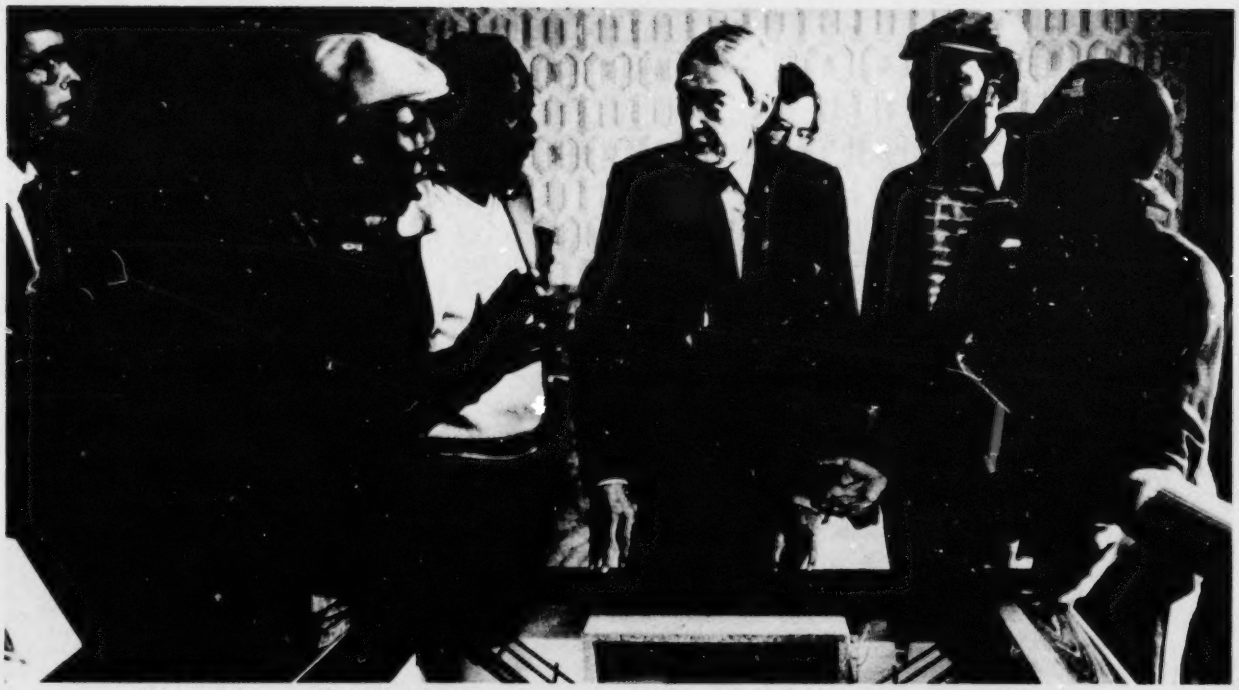
Liverpool police have co-operated in the authority's secret inquiry into what went wrong last summer. An impressive list of witnesses have been summoned, including Scarman himself who privately described the committee's work as "creative, stimulating and intelligent."

Scarman's report can hardly make the sea of discontent still swelling in so many inner cities more stormy but whether it can calm it remains an open question. After the excitement raised in Brixton by his sympathetic manner at the inquiry, Scarman's report has created disappointment.

Many blacks believe his recommendations will be ignored by the government. Even if they are taken up, others fear their effect on Brixton's young blacks will be minimal.

Certainly, they will not affect the immediate fate of Michael Bailey. He is currently facing serious charges of robbery and assault. It must be emphasised that he was *not* arrested in connection with the Brixton riots and that no evidence emerged in the Scarman inquiry to suggest he was criminally involved in the disturbances.

Last Thursday morning, as the nation digested Scarman's prescription for "a civilised life," Bailey made a brief appearance at Lambeth Magistrates Court. He arrived and left in a police car. There was a curt five-minute hearing. The upshot was speedy and inevitable: he was remanded in custody and packed off back to his cell in Brixton Prison.



WHAT THE SCARMAN REPORT RECOMMENDED

Lord Scarman's report included suggestions for central government, local authorities, the Commission for Racial Equality and the media. But the bulk of the recommendations affected the police. Of these the most important were:

- The introduction of an independent element into the police complaints procedure.
- A statutory framework for police-community consultation.
- An urgent study of ways to recruit more police from ethnic minorities.
- Scientific ways of detecting racial prejudice in police applicants should be vigorously pursued.
- Existing law should be used to ban 'racist' marches in sensitive areas. If this proves impracticable, the Public Order Act 1936 should be amended.

Among Scarman's more general suggestions were calls for:

- A better co-ordinated and directed attack by the government on inner-city problems.
- Local authorities to review their housing policies to eliminate possible discrimination and provide better education for ethnic minorities.
- The government to give a lead in ethnic minority education. Areas of special need include the provision of facilities for under-fives and training teachers in the cultural backgrounds and needs of minority groups.
- The media to examine its coverage of major social disorders.

Why two blacks are wary of police

POST-SCARMAN, young blacks in Brixton feel much as they did in the aftermath of the riots: as if they are in a zoo. They are wary and resentful of questions and they hate cameras, writes Elisabeth Grice.

Few know anything about the Scarman report except that it is published. Fewer still appear to care. Their faith in Scarman as a fair chronicler is cancelled out by disbelief that his report will improve their social conditions or their relations with the police.

Those who frequent Brixton's two youth clubs have relied on their leaders to provide a précis of Scarman.

The two young blacks quoted below, interviewed at the Railton Road youth and community centre, were ready to talk about life in Brixton but would not be photographed.

Sandra Gravesande, 22, Guyanese, secretary:

"People here can live with boarded-up shops and bad housing, but they can't take physical harassment. Me and my boy friend were raided at six in the morning. We heard crashing and heavy footsteps. There were about 15 or 20 officers in all. The worst of it was their rudeness. "It's a fucking raid, you bastards," they yelled. The rudest were the young policemen.

When the riots happened I realised I was seeing history being made. It was a relief. It had to come. I knew it would mean that people would finally listen to us. If I had been out there I would probably have picked up a brick. You felt it was your people you were fighting for.

It's quietened down a lot now. Not so many police seem to be going round with the idea that it would be good to kick up a few coons.

All the local clubs have closed down because of police raids. We are not allowed to enjoy ourselves. We have nowhere to go. How can we hold on to our West Indian culture? There is a fantastic community spirit but no community centre."

Alvin Senior, 24, part-time youth worker, Railton Road:

"Maybe I'd be locked up by now if it wasn't for my youth and community centre work here. I left school without exams and there was no-one to give me any direction. At school it was all, "Oh, black people make good athletes." The old stereotype.

We are not as barbaric in Brixton as the media make out. You get stick from the police and you get stick from the National Front. You don't report some of the incidents because it just gets you into hot water. So you think you'll arm yourself against racial attacks. Then you get picked up for carrying offensive weapons.

You're up against individual policemen who want to make a name for themselves. They want promotion results, more arrests. They join for action, not just to walk the streets with their hands behind their backs doing community work. Our parents used to think we were making it up when we said the police harassed us. Not now. If there are no changes, there will be more explosions."

Crying out for action

WHEN LORD SCARMAN began his inquiry into the Brixton riots, not many people expected that his report would matter. The main purpose of appointing him seemed to be to dampen the fires. It seemed at first unlikely that he would be able to conduct orderly hearings, improbable that he could produce anything of convincing relevance, however deeply he penetrated. As more disorders flared in Liverpool, Manchester and other cities, and the noble judge ranged across the country in their wake, hopes for cogency and point became even dimmer.

Such scepticism was misplaced. The Scarman report is a masterly document. Its narrative of events is lucid and compelling. Its recommendations for action come with more coherence, and no less authority, for being written by one man rather than a committee. People say this is unsuitable work for a judge. They have got the argument the wrong way round. It is a sad reflection on the state of the political system that only a judge could be relied on to carry the conviction and credibility necessary to bring order out of chaos. Lord Scarman did so in Brixton in the short term. Will he, in the inner cities generally, in the long?

The report is even-handed in assigning blame. No sentiment is wasted on the rioters. Community leaders are criticised along with the police for the social breakdown which led to the riots. But in discussing remedies and reform, the report is far from ambiguous. It is, says Scarman, the police who have most cause to examine their conduct. From these balanced and judicious pages emerges the most lethal critique of policing that has ever been made by a judge. He fully understands the police's problems and makes no pretence that rough situations do not arise which demand tough measures. But he says the police must do better. And, to their great credit, the Metropolitan Police, instead of retreating behind a barricade of defensive indignation, have responded at several levels positively. They have said they were wrong and they are anxious to learn. This attitude is in sharp contrast to the cynical sniping of black extremists and some left-wing politicians.

Recruitment, training, supervision and discipline in the police are all found by Scarman to be defective. In part this is common ground: for example, all urban police forces have been seeking more black recruits for years. But in other parts, the report presses the police to think more deeply and act more wisely. Longer training, more attention to community policing, better dialogue with police authorities: all these are proposed in the interest of improving policing in the highly complex and sensitive world of the inner city. In some quarters this part of the Scarman package has been depicted as urging policemen to give special treatment to "ethnic" criminals. This is a gross and perhaps malicious distortion. The only specific of this kind is the proposal that racially prejudiced behaviour by policemen should be a dismissable offence. Is that regarded as contentious?

The most difficult ground Scarman covers concerns complaints against the police. He thinks, in common with many well-informed people, that anything less than a full independent investigative process will fail to allay the deep public misgivings about the present method. But he realises that this may not be acceptable. His compromise recommendation has a lot to be said for it. First, he suggests a conciliation process to resolve minor complaints. He then suggests that investigations, while continuing to be carried out by the police themselves, should be supervised by an independent outsider. Taken together these would reduce the rigidity and increase the credibility of what is done in this vital area of accountabilty. Certainly the present system, however honourably operated, will no longer do.

Like all such reports, this one can only be the beginning of a political argument. The fact that a judge makes certain recommendations does not close the discussion. Besides, Lord Scarman is often cautious in saying how emphatically he favours one course rather than another. When it comes to considering the social and economic conditions out of which the riots grew, he does well to fall in behind the select committee report on racial disadvantage rather than tread wigless into territory which an English judge must be particularly careful to avoid. All the same, he has deployed the select committee's arguments skilfully, and not shrunk from reiterating the platitude—now, however, under challenge from the right—that unemployment and bad housing have some connection with the propensity of groups of citizens to behave as they behaved in Brixton and Toxteth and Moss Side this year.

The government would like to duck that link. It is very reluctant to admit that there is much it can do—mainly because it claims it has no funds to do anything. But the report alone can apply only a soothing and temporary balm. It cries out eloquently for action. While the government can indeed not do everything, it can have the decisive influence both on reform of the police and on inner city renewal. Will these be taken seriously? Or will they remain in the pending file, until the next explosion?

3 *Accounting for handicap*

3.1 In this section I will be exploring accounts of handicap with a considerable, though not exclusive, emphasis on mental handicap. I will be looking in particular at views which stress deficiencies in individuals and those which account for the handicap of individuals in terms of a social reaction to them. I will examine the scope of such explanations and the possible reasons for maintaining distinctions between them.

Mental handicap: clinical and sociological perspectives

Activity 1 I want you to read three passages:

(a) An extract from the introduction to the article by Timothy Booth, the rest of which appears in the Reader. I have included this extract as Appendix 1.

(b) The conclusion to Timothy Booth's article in the Reader (pp. 257–8 of Reading 4.2).

(c) The article in the Reader by Jane Mercer, 'Sociological perspectives on mild mental retardation' (Reading 1.2).

As you read through these pieces try to identify the following:

(a) what is meant by a clinical perspective on mental handicap;

(b) the consequences to the people to whom it is applied;

(c) what Jane Mercer sees as its appropriate range of application;

(d) what is meant by a social system;

(e) what is meant by a sociological perspective;

(f) what social systems identify children as mentally retarded.

Comment (a) The clinical perspective on mental handicap which Jane Mercer identifies with the 'medical model' appears to be given two major strands:

(i) It views mental handicap as similar to a chronic untreatable illness and emphasizes diagnosis and causation (and also prevention):

> 'We say that a person is mentally retarded with the clear implication that mental retardation is a condition that exists in that person. Implicit in the viewpoint is the assumption that mental retardation can be present in a person although undetected—that it is a condition which can exist independent of its being identified and labelled, just as a case of rheumatic fever can exist undiagnosed' (pp. 14–15).

(ii) There is a second identified characteristic of the clinical perspective which is buried in Jane Mercer's paper but made explicit in the extract from Timothy Booth's. For, according to Jane Mercer, the medical model views mental retardation as a physical condition *characterizing the person* (p. 14). The idea that a physical condition should characterize a person may seem like a contradiction in terms. When someone has an illness, we think of it as external to their personality; something they *have* rather than something they *are*. But it is this aspect which Timothy Booth identifies as the clinical perspective's pre-eminent feature. According to him it views subnormality 'as a fixed attribute of the person that intrudes uniformly on all aspects of living; a brand, as it were, which a person carries with him as an indelible mark of his singularity'. This propensity to treat mental handicap as both an illness and an identity mirrors the dominant approach in psychiatry and has provided an equivalent justification for hospitalizing both mentally 'ill' and mentally handicapped people. While in theory one might argue that it is no part of a *biological* model to view people rather than illness as an appropriate subject for medical intervention, it is an enduring feature of medical practice to do just that. As a consequence of treating the disability as the person the clinical perspective emphasizes the features handicapped people have in common, such as some degree of incompetence in the mentally handicapped, rather than their diversity. The diagnosis comes to serve as an explanation of the actions of handicapped people and the *reactions* of others to them; 'it accounts for the realities of discrimination and prejudice they encounter in terms of the facts of their disability'.

(b) Treating mental handicap as if it were an illness has major consequences in terms of the language, behaviour and actions directed towards people so classified. They become patients, have frequent contact with doctors and may find themselves living in hospitals: 'Defining such persons as "ill" changes their status in society, the roles they are expected to play, the social institutions which will treat them, and the professional persons who will be responsible for their care' (Reading 1.2, p. 13).

(c) Both Jane Mercer and Tim Booth think the clinical perspective, as they define it, has a continuing validity. It is not Timothy Booth's purpose 'to attack the clinical perspective on subnormality', and he argues that 'without doubt most of the advances in the care and treatment of mentally handicapped people have been achieved within this tradition'. Jane Mercer, also, has no wish to dispose of the clinical perspective, merely to see it retreat from the field of mild mental retardation:

> For persons who are severely and profoundly retarded and for persons who show clear evidence of organic damage or pathology, the medical model provides a very adequate frame of reference and basis for action. The pathological perspective has proven to be immensely fruitful in the study of phenylketonurea (PKU), of Down's Syndrome and other clearly organic and/or genetic conditions.

(d) Jane Mercer talks of a social system as a set of rules and expectations which shape human activity. In her paper she is interested in the social systems in *classrooms* and *schools*. Timothy Booth is primarily concerned with the way *families* react to their children. Jane Mercer recognizes that a doctor's surgery or a hospital form other social systems, though neither she nor Timothy Booth seem to realize that this undermines the contrast between clinical and sociological perspectives. For the clinical perspective can be viewed as the approach to mental handicap adopted in *clinical* social systems. Social systems, according to Jane Mercer, have a normalizing *function* and a system of sanctions to control deviance.

(e) Jane Mercer and Timothy Booth treat 'sociological' and 'social system' perspectives as identical. 'From a social system perspective, mental retardation is not viewed as individual pathology but as a status which an individual holds in a particular social system and a role which he plays as an occupant of that status' (Reading 1.2, p. 17). 'Subnormality is not a quality within the person but a status allocated to them.' 'It is a quality of relationships *between* people' (Appendix 1). According to the sociological perspective, mental handicap only exists and can only be understood in terms of social relationships, it 'cannot be defined in advance of an understanding of the social context from which it borrows its identity'. However, the social contexts to which Timothy Booth or Jane Mercer refer are relatively narrow in their scope. They are schools and families rather than political, economic and cultural systems. But it is to these that one must turn if one wishes to *explain* the value that is placed on incompetent people.

According to the sociological perspective, subnormality is depicted as 'rule-breaking or deviance' rather than pathology: it is 'disclosed in the way mentally handicapped people fail to live up to the claims and expectations which are made and held of their contemporaries and reaffirmed by the allowances and adjustments which others feel compelled to make in the way they manage their relations with them' (Reading 4.2, p. 207). Jane Mercer appears to explain the existence of the status of 'mentally retarded person' as a sanction to keep most pupils in line. I mentioned in Unit 1/2 that the maladjusted category is used in that way at times. I suspect that the devaluation and segregation of incompetence has to be explained in wider political and cultural terms.

If we think of slow learners as rule-breakers in much the same way as disruptive or disaffected pupils, then the inclusion of mentally handicapped children in ordinary schools can be seen as a challenge to the power structures which maintain them. The application of the clinical perspective is an attempt to remove this challenge by defining the inadequacy of social systems as an inadequacy of individuals. The application of the clinical perspective or '*the medicalization of deviance*' is not a neutral activity of limited but equal validity to other approaches. Understanding its role is *part* of the sociological approach to mental handicap.

(f) From Jane Mercer's account it is clear that the possibility of formal categorization of children as mentally retarded only exists within some schools. Outside school, after school age and in Catholic schools in the US, no such categories exist.

3.2 If we attempt to understand mental handicap in terms of its social context it may appear that we are denying its reality. A reviewer of the Reader, *The Practice of Special Education*, argued that in attempting to give a 'jolt to prevailing throught and practice', Jane Mercer's view of mental retardation and Timothy Booth's views of severe subnormality as a social status 'overstate the case' (Adams, 1981). After all, could the thirty-five year old in an adult training centre playing with lego actually be conforming to expectations rather than expressing her own capacities and limited interests? Could we change our expectations and enable her to drive a crane or become a brain surgeon? Is she, like the unliberated plodders described by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968), a candidate for a new production of Pygmalion in the ATC? The answer to all these questions is obvious. Except in very rare cases of severe deprivation or disturbance, severe mental handicap will not disappear with changes in social circumstances, even though the changes in competence observed in people as their conditions are made more humane can be dramatic. The persistence of 'handicap' through changes in circumstance may tempt us to view it after all as a clinical condition within the person.

3.3 You may recall the distinction made between impairment and handicap in the case of people with physical disabilities. Being blind or having paralysed limbs involves an impairment, but the extent and quality of the burden related to these impairments depends on social circumstance. In the case of mental handicap there may be no such obvious impairment—instead, we need a new set of distinctions. In thinking about failure in school in Unit 1/2, I distinguished between incompetence and failure. If a child could not perform a task this would be regarded as educational failure only if achievement of such a task were part of an agreed standard of educational success. It is educational failure rather than incompetence which constitutes the handicap. The ascription of handicap always presumes comparison against some socially defined standard.

3.4 What is it that makes the thirty-five year old playing with lego handicapped, but the three and a half year old performing the same activities a normal healthy nursery school child? In themselves, the performances may be very similar, but their meaning is vastly different. We can think of the mental handicap of the thirty-five year old as constituted by three related factors: our expectations, our values and our willingness to grant her access to social and material benefits. Her performance disrupts our expectations of what thirty-five year olds should do. She is an unsuccessful, unachieving person who, we may believe, makes little contribution to community life. As she will always be dependent on others, she makes a negative contribution to the nation's economy and stability. We choose the level of material benefits she receives and the extent to which we will adapt ourselves and the world to her needs and desires.

3.5 The particular level of incompetence we demand before we ascribe the term 'mental handicap' is dependent on social factors, but is not necessarily arbitrary. Rising unemployment may well alter the point at which we are willing to say people are legitimately unemployed because they are incompetent. In fact there are those who regard unemployment as the achievement of incompetence. The pressure on places in adult training centres from those responsible for placing ESN(M) school leavers may lead to their automatic acquisition of the label 'mentally handicapped'. The category is, then, open ended rather than precise, although spurious precision can be given by defining it in terms of a range of scores on IQ tests. The negotiation between formal and informal categorization of someone as mentally handicapped is illustrated by Case study 19, 'Jacqueline Cunningham, a daughter'. Mrs Cunningham fights the official labelling of her daughter, but as Jacqueline grows older, even her mother comes to see and describe her as mentally handicapped.

3.6 Strictly speaking there is no category of mental handicap in British schools. Children were educationally subnormal (moderate) or educationally subnormal (severe). There is however a strong and persistent tendency for the term to be used in education and outside it particularly for adults. In discussing special education we have to recognize the language in use as well as examining its reference and value. After the 1981 Act, children are able to have mild, moderate or severe learning difficulties in schools, but the socially constructed reality of mental handicap will not disappear either inside or outside them.

Reading Now read Case study 41, 'Scenes from Ward 7'.

Comment I do not want to comment in detail on the case study. It is carefully observed and written and I recommend the rest of Maureen Oswin's book to you (Oswin, 1978). While the development and allocation of perspectives may seem like a game of academic charades, it has real consequences. Despite Jane Mercer's concession that the severely handicapped are well served by the clinical perspective, and Timothy Booth's suggestion that it has been the spur for major advances in treatment of the mentally handicapped, hospital 'care' appears for the children described by Maureen Oswin to be a contradiction in terms.

In an earlier book Maureen Oswin documented the empty hours at weekends for children living in institutions. One child pursued her relentlessly with his questions:

> *A child's questions*
>
> Jason was five. Cerebral palsy had given him permanently writhing limbs and slurred speech. Family rejection had given him a never-eased home-sickness. Social provision gave him a hospital to live in. A lively mind gave him an insatiable curiosity about the world.
>
> 'Why can't I purr like a kitten?' he asked. This was fairly easy to answer.
>
> 'Why did my mummy eat me?'
>
> '*Eat* you?' This was startling.
>
> 'Yes, you told me yesterday I was in her tummy when I was a baby, how did I get there, did she eat me?'
>
> After a while this was sorted out to our mutual satisfaction.
>
> 'Where do I keep my tears when I am not using them?' This was a little harder. He may well wonder where they came from, for he had known more tears than most of us.
>
> 'Why *do* I get sad such a lot of times?' All the pat answers from past experience with inquisitive infant children could not rescue me very comfortably from this question.
>
> 'Have I got to stay all my life in this hospital?' What answer now? I thought of all the brave reforms throughout social history, the early crude attempts to help the destitute and improve workhouses, housing and factories. There were all the committees, Members of Parliament, journalists, civil servants, the charities, the wealthy and the poor, whose opinions and ideals had shaped English social history over the last 200 years. There were Childrens' Acts, Housing Acts, Education Acts, Mental Health Acts, the National Health Service, and Acts for Divorce, Criminal Justice and Abortion; there were laws to protect women, homosexuals, animals, immigrants, house purchasers, landlords, street vendors and car drivers; the twentieth century—the age of humane reasoning and compassion. But where did young Jason and his kind fit into this good age of reform and broad thinking?
>
> 'You're not answering me. *Will* I have to stay all my life in this hospital?'
>
> (Oswin, 1973, pp. 225–6)

A handicapped identity

3.7 I mentioned that one identified feature of the clinical perspective was that an aspect of a person, such as a physical impairment, might be treated as if it determined the whole personality. That is what seemed to lie behind the rejection of the label 'handicapped' by the boy I mentioned in the introduction to the unit. In *The Making of Blind Men*, Robert Scott (1969) described the process whereby children without sight learnt how to become blind Americans. His account echoes the approach of Jane Mercer and Timothy Booth. There are equally distinctive social expectations, organizations and professionals for blind people in the UK:

> There is nothing inherent in the condition of blindness that requires a person to be docile, dependent, melancholy, or helpless; nor is there anything about it that should lead him to become independent or assertive. Blind men are made, and by the same processes of socialization that have made us all . . .
>
> Most adults, for example, are in general agreement about how children ought to behave, and most of them also hold certain relatively uniform expectations of

the behavior of other specific categories of people, such as men, women, old people, young people, whites, blacks, married people, single people, doctors or street cleaners. There is, then, a certain consensus about how individuals who fall into different categories ought to behave. Indeed, it is as though a putative social identity exists for the various categories of people in our culture. Whenever we recognize an individual as belonging to a particular category, we impute to him the social identity reserved for persons in it, and we evaluate him in terms of whether or not his behaviour conforms to this putative social identity. To the extent that an individual correctly perceives our evaluations of him and internalizes them as part of his self-concept, this putative social identity becomes a personal identity in fact . . .

At the core of any blind man's experience of blindness are the attitudes, beliefs, and feelings he has about the kind of person he is, what he is capable of doing, how he is supposed to feel, how he is different from others, how he is like others, and so forth. These things are the substance of his self-concept . . .

A part of the socialization experience in any society involves learning attitudess beliefs, and values about stigmatized people such as the blind. These belief, concern the effects that the condition is alleged to have on personality, and how a person who becomes blind is changed because of it. It is by reference to these beliefs that a putative social identity for the blind is constructed. When the blindness belongs to ourselves, these beliefs we have acquired about blindness become internal guidelines for our own behavior. In this sense, we have all in a general way learned the role of blind man; however, for most of us, it is a role we will never have to play . . .

Even if he rejects [this role] as false, however, [it] may nevertheless become a reality. The assumption, for example, that blindness is incapacitating may lead those who hold it to deny the blind person any opportunity to exercise the skills by which he might attain independence or mastery . . .

From the uncertain responses of sighted people to them, blind people draw inferences (often erroneous ones) about the probable beliefs and assumptions that must underlie such reactions. To the extent that these beliefs and assumptions are internalized, they become part of the blind man's self-concept . . .

In highly industrialized societies such as our own, the responsibility for the management, control, and rehabilitation of blind people is vested primarily in specialized organizations, most of which are large, complex bureaucratic structures . . .

For some, these organizations represent opportunity structures within which careers can develop and grow; for others, they are places to go for help or recreation; for still others, they are places—often the only ones—in which remunerative employment can be secured; and, for some, they are places to be avoided at all costs . . .

With the growth of organizations for the blind, a profession related to blindness has developed. It is called 'work for the blind', and its practitioners are known as 'workers for the blind' or simply 'blindness workers'. The legitimacy of this profession is in large part based upon its practitioners' claims to specialized knowledge and expertise concerning problems of blindness.

While he learns to understand himself from this perspective the blind person is also acquiring blindness-related attitudes and behavior patterns that 'go along with' his rehabilitators' approach. Thus it is that, through the same mechanisms that operate in personal relationships, many of the attitudes, behavior patterns, and feelings at the core of a blind person's self-concept are learned from blindness workers in the context of agencies for the blind.

(Scott, 1969, pp. 14–19)

3.8 Scott omitted a discussion of educational provision from his description of the socialization of blind children. Yet the unusual and even traumatic educational career experienced by blind children may have a powerful effect on their identities. Some children in the UK are still sent to residential schools from the age of four solely because they cannot see.

3.9 At worst, when people take on an identity determined by an unvalued physical impairment they may experience a destruction of their humanity. Micheline was born with brittle bones and opened her reminiscences on her disability with this remark:

> Animals have it easy. I mean, for example, that it is very unlikely that a horse wastes much time wondering if she is really a horse, whilst human beings seem

disposed to spending vast amounts of totally unproductive time wondering if they are really human beings at all. Well some do.

(Micheline, 1981, p. 23)

3.10 The reduction of a person's identity and individuality to a disability is not just a feature of doctors' talk or the language of strangers. It may be absorbed and even actively pursued by disabled people themselves. Micheline continued her account in the following way:

> The first time the doubt that I belonged to this particular planet struck me, it was a glorious, calm, blue-skied day when I was twelve years old. Lying flat on my back in the garden staring at the sky I was thinking about growing up. Until that moment I think I had somehow believed that when I grew up I would become 'normal', i.e. without a disability. 'Normal' then meant to me 'like my big sister', pretty, rebellious, going out with boys, doing wonderful, naughty things with them, leaving school and getting a job, leaving home, getting married and having children. That momentous day I suddenly realized that my life was not going to be like that at all. I was going to be just the same as I had always been—very small, funnily shaped, unable to walk. It seemed at that moment that the sky cracked . . . my girl-friend from next door came out and suggested a game as she had done many times before. I remembered her look of confusion and hurt when I said I didn't want to play any more.
>
> (Micheline, 1981, p. 24)

Micheline eventually began the slow process of abandoning her handicapped identity.

3.11 In the play, *Children of a Lesser God*, Sarah signed an eloquent rejection of the image of herself offered by the hearing world:

> For all my life I have been the creation of other people. The first thing I was ever able to understand was that everyone was supposed to hear but I couldn't and that was bad. Then they told me everyone was supposed to be smart but I was dumb. Then they said, oh no, I wasn't permanently dumb, only temporarily, but to be smart I had to become an imitation of the people who had from birth everything a person has to have to be good: ears that hear, mouth that speaks, eyes that read, brain that understands. Well, my brain understands a lot; and my eyes are my ears; and my hands are my voice; and my language, my speech, my ability to communicate is as great as yours. Greater, maybe, because I can communicate to you in one image an idea more complex than you can speak to each other in fifty words. For example, the sign 'to connect', a simple sign—but it means so much more when it is moved between us like this. Now it means to be joined in a shared relationship, to be individual yet as one. A whole concept just like that. Well, I want to be joined to other people, but for all my life people have spoken for me: *she* says; *she* means; *she* wants. As if there were no I. As if there were no one in here who *could* understand. Until you let me be an individual, an *I*, just as you are, you will never truly be able to come inside my silence and know me. And until you can do that, I will never let myself know you. Until that time, we cannot be joined. We cannot share a relationship.
>
> (Medoff, 1979)

Understanding Down's Syndrome

3.12 It is part of the clinical perspective to treat groups of handicapped people as if they were identical in essential respects. In the case of Down's Syndrome, this is complicated by the fact that, since 1959, people affected by it have been known to share a common fundamental genetic feature: of their 23 pairs of chromosomes, most have an additional chromosome on the 21st pair. They do not share any genetic material such as a common rogue gene, as in haemophilia or some forms of muscular dystrophy. I want to consider how an emphasis on the similarity of people with Down's Syndrome may have prevented an accurate assessment of our knowledge about them.

3.13 What we know about Down's Syndrome depends on what we mean by it. One of the most widely read paediatricians in the UK, Professor Illingworth, began his description of the syndrome with the words: 'Mongolism (Down's Syndrome) is a chromosomal abnormality' (Illingworth, 1974). If the medical approach to Down's Syndrome was simply a matter of reference to the biological facts of trisomy or mosaicism then all might be well. But there is a tendency to talk of Down's Syndrome as if it defined *the*

common physical, intellectual and emotional features shared by the group of people with trisomy. Once such 'facts' have been ascertained, they may be reproduced persistently despite contrary evidence, and they may be thought to characterize all people with trisomy without regard to their individual characteristics. The 'clinical' description may become an inaccurate stereotype. There is a further problem which arises once we have identified the common features of a group of people. For we may come to see them as having a greater resemblance to each other than they do to other people and use this as a reason and justification for treating them as a group apart. To my eyes now children with Down's Syndrome do not look particularly Mongolian; they have, rather, the same strong resemblance to other members of their families that one sees in children without Down's Syndrome. This came as quite a surprise to me as I started to rid myself of my own stereotyped picture and got to know children with Down's Syndrome and their families.

3.14 Professor Illingworth's account of Down's Syndrome continues:

> Mongolism (Down's Syndrome) is a chromosomal abnormality, usually trisomy 21. The incidence is one in 350 births. The diagnosis is made by an experienced midwife, usually at the moment of birth, but sometimes the diagnosis is delayed. It is made on the basis of the typical face, but there are other non-specific features—a flat occiput, rather small head, incurving little finger, a single palmar crease and spade shaped hands. The finer palmar markings are characteristic in the eyes of the expert with good sight. A quarter have congenital heart disease. After about seven years they develop a fissured tongue, and in later years about ten per cent develop cataracts. Puberty is delayed, and most are infertile, but if a female mongol produces a child, there is an even chance that the child will be normal. Mongols rarely have fits, unlike other defectives. They are all retarded in development, but they are relatively better in the early months, their development slowing down after the first six to nine months . . .
>
> Their mean IQ is 28; there is some scatter; the majority will go to a 'special' school for SSN children, but a few will get to an ESN school. They hardly ever learn to read or write—or at least to read and write with understanding. There is a common statement, repeated from textbook to textbook, that mongols are placid, easy to manage and musical. This is incorrect. Many studies have shown that they are no different in behaviour from other equally defective children, and they are not musical . . .
>
> Half die by the age of five. The mean expectation of life of survivors is 26 years. They are prone to respiratory tract infections. They tend to become fat because of relative inactivity.
>
> (Illingworth, 1974, pp. 107–8)

3.15 The most straightforward problem with this 'knowledge' which shapes the minds of generations of medical students and is here packaged by Illingworth in 'a paediatricians manual for teachers' is that much of it is inaccurate. He is right to draw attention to the circulation problems of children with Down's Syndrome. The problems some may have in warming up on cold days may constitute their major 'educational' handicap. He does not seem to be aware of the very high incidence of hearing problems in such children. The incidence rate is closer to one in 1000 births than one in 350. Half the children with Down's Syndrome are not dead by the age of five—that ceased to be true after antibiotics controlled early respiratory infections, and mean life expectation after that is about 40 years. And, even bearing in mind the limited usefulness of IQ tests, is the average IQ of children with Down's Syndrome really 28? Rynders and Horrobin (1980) have examined the recent research into the intellectual and educational attainments of people with Down's Syndrome. They suggested that the overriding problem in learning from such studies is that they are conducted on the assumption that people with Down's Syndrome are all very similar. As with Professor Illingworth, it's as if researchers were so deeply convinced that they already knew about the nature of Down's Syndrome that they did not have to pay attention to the details of their data collection. The 105 studies they reviewed with relevant educational information published in the years 1963–78 had the following defects:

(a) Seventy-one did not report on the type of chromosomal defect.

(b) Sixty-three gave no data on the sex of the people involved.

(c) Twenty-five gave no indication of whether they lived with their family or in an institution or the quality of care they received.

These were the largest studies—comprising 79 per cent of the individuals studied. Of the 80 other studies, 74 per cent were for individuals in institutions.

(d) Forty-six studies grouped data from infancy to adulthood.

3.16 Rynders and Horrobin quoted a professor of genetics as claiming that in all his years of practice he had never met a child with Down's Syndrome who wasn't severely mentally handicapped. But on the basis of their analysis of the findings of the research, with all its deficiencies, they argued that current research would put the chances of a child with Down's Syndrome having an IQ figure above 50 at between 30–55 per cent. They suggested that doctors should inform new parents of children with Down's syndrome:

(a) There is a definite possibility that their children will not be severely mentally handicapped.

(b) There is a great deal of variability in their development.

(c) The limits of the educational capacities of children with Down's Syndrome are virtually unknown.

3.17 Rynders and Horrobin did not dwell on the question of the validity of IQ assessments. It is simply not valid to use tests designed to measure the capacities of one group for the purpose of assessing another group who may have had different experiences and have a different range of interests and abilities. This is aside from the nonsense of using a test which may enable generalizations to be made about large groups of people to attempt to say something about one individual. That is the clinical or positivist fallacy; by their very nature generalizations do not apply to individuals unless what is true in general is also true of *each* individual.

3.18 The power of ideology in directing and determining knowledge is conveyed by a popular myth about the genesis of Down's Syndrome. It has been assumed that the propensity for older women to give birth to children with Down's Syndrome had something to do with defective ova which had been around too long. By matching the genetic material of the offspring against the karyotopes (chromosome pictures) of both parents it has now been shown that the origin of trisomy is often to be found in men (Abroms and Bennet, 1979).

Activity 2 The power of the clinical fallacy is starkly illustrated in a report by Earl Butterfield (1961), an extract from which I have included as Appendix 2. It concerns a man who at the age of 36 was said to have an IQ of 28 (Professor Illingworth's mean figure) and was committed to a mental subnormality institution after his mother died. Read Appendix 2, and then look at *The Guardian*'s report from November 1981, reproduced below. I suggest you think about the following questions:

(a) Why is E said to be an overachiever?

(b) Why is he committed to a mental subnormality hospital?

Comment In case you think that the attitudes in the 1961 paper are outdated I should remind you that, in Case study 20, a professional involved with the families of the children referred to the children as 'overcooked mongols' and the authorities appeared to be equally provoked by their achievements.

3.19 If IQ tests are a poor basis for predicting the abilities of children with Down's Syndrome, at least they do involve children in performing a task which we can relate, by using our imagination, to an educational task. The discovery of trisomy, or more usually the noting of certain facial features, is commonly used as the basis for ascribing severe mental handicap to babies with Down's Syndrome. During the 1981 trial of a doctor who had prescribed 'nursing care only' to a baby born with Down's Syndrome, most public discussion assumed that all such children were severely handicapped. In fact the possession of trisomy plays a limited part in determining the range of capacities, interests and skills of children with Down's Syndrome, which is so great that it cannot be used as the basis for a pre-arranged common educational plan.

What is the handicap of Down's Syndrome?

3.20 Given their variation in educational achievement and family and material circumstances, what is the handicap that children with Down's Syndrome are most likely to share? We know that they are often thought to be severely mentally handicapped when they are not, and that this diagnosis is made on the basis of their appearance rather than their capabilities. We know that they may be excluded from ESN(M) schools because they look mentally handicapped, and that in some areas of the country people with Down's Syndrome are not encouraged by careers officers to seek employment (Lane, 1981—see also Unit 4). When the unit for ESN(S) children was first opened at Pingle comprehensive school it was referred to as the 'mong wing', and parents told me of their initial fears of having their own handicapped children mixing with 'mongols'. They are often treated, then, according to a historically derived and inaccurate stereotype which is rarely held up for critical re-examination. What is their principle handicap?

Clinical categories and placement

3.21 The latter part of Jane Mercer's article portrayed the decision making system whereby children in California were transferred to classes for the mentally retarded. As is particularly clear from her later publications, placing disproportionate numbers of minority group children in special classes largely occurred after the assessment procedures. Similar numbers of black, hispanic and white children were referred by their teachers, but many more of the first two groups fared poorly on the tests. This was part of the evidence leading up to the appropriate assessment clause of PL 94–142. But after noting correctly that tests discriminated against black and hispanic students Jane Mercer made a false move. For she asserted that such children were *incorrectly placed* and hence implied and accepted that other children were correctly placed. She thus reinforced the conception of education by category and reproduced an old distinction between constitutional and cultural forms of mental retardation (see Zigler, 1967). The practice of segregation of retarded children was fine provided that *only the really retarded* were so categorized.

3.22 The very notion of placement by category presumes a clinical approach to handicap. Children are assigned to a category as the diagnosis of their condition. Children within the category are presumed to have similar educational requirements and a form of education is prescribed as if it were the appropriate medication for the condition. Having accepted the legitimacy of clinically defined retardation, Jane Mercer went on to concede the appropriateness of that approach for large numbers of students.

3.23 The distinction between cultural retardation and constitutional retardation is widespread and maintained with relentless thoroughness in the USSR, where children are sent to residential schools for the retarded if they exhibit an impaired capacity to develop as well as current low attainment. It is on this basis that the 'oligophrenic', or brain damaged, children are distinguished from the temporarily retarded. What is the validity of these diagnostic groups? Andrew Sutton has followed the Russian practice and advocates its adoption in the UK. Instead of the ESN(M) category there would be two groups:

> The smaller would comprise handicapped children, fewer than the present ESN(M) population (perhaps 0.7 per cent) . . . drawn in part from the present ESN schools, partly perhaps from other categories of special education and certainly from the normal schools. This population would have a 'real' handicap, be less socially skewed than the present ESN(M) and hopefully, there-

> fore, less stigmatized. The other, larger group would not be handicapped children though they would still have special needs. These needs might involve long-term or social interventions in addition to educational. The educational help for these children would depend upon their normal schools, but should involve changes in goals, attitudes and practices on the part of their teachers rather than an increase in material resources.
>
> (Sutton, 1978, p. 34)

3.24 It is, of course, possible to maintain that there are two types of ESN(M) child without suggesting that one of these requires segregated schooling. But it is implausible that children who don't learn should fall neatly and naturally into two groups. Could there really only be two types of child with learning difficulties? Are there not as many categories of child as we choose to recognize?

3.25 In her study of decision making about ESN(M) placement in Birmingham schools (the Reader, Reading 4.3), Sally Tomlinson questions the basis for ESN(M) placement in general and the existence of the ESN(M) category. She attempts to explain the overwhelming preponderance of children of manual working class fathers in ESN(M) schools and the over-representation of black children. Her explanations goes beyond those of Jane Mercer, for she sees the existence of ESN(M) schools and the allocations of pupils to them as helping to reproduce the political and economic systems and to maintain order within it. Professionals are seen as the unwitting but willing agents of social control, for they are the visible beneficiaries of the system. I will return to this structural-functional view of special education when I discuss the political and social limits of integration in Unit 14. This view sees practices in special education as co-ordinated and *fixed* according to their purpose in reproducing the political and economic system. The fact is that, largely, society *is* reproduced and order is maintained. As products of their culture, people within any institution we care to examine will appear to be passing on and maintaining the power relationships of the system unless they are actively and successfully seeking to change them. But we can still ask of any particular institution whether a change in its mode of functioning would cause the sky to fall on our heads. Are ESN(M) schools and their associated categorization procedures the social glue without which our world would fall apart?

Accounts of handicap

3.26 You may recall Patricia Pott's metaphor for professional groups: she saw them as competing nations looking for the chance to extend their territories and markets under the diplomatic cover of the multi-disciplinary team—the special educational equivalent of the United Nations. You might think of these professionals as the military wing of organizations which also have a political or theoretical branch to supply them with a philosophy and language to support and discuss their operations. This would be one way to characterize the relationship between applied and pure psychologists discussed by Chris Sinha and Will Swann (see Unit 12). Many educational and clinical psychologists look towards learning theories and theories of development and intelligence to justify their approach to the problems of children. The problems fall within their sphere of competence because they can be understood within a theoretical framework which formed part of their training. Doctors, similarly, may draw on knowledge of genetics or neurology or diet to sustain their involvement in special education. The relationship between professional practice and parent discipline is a symbiotic one, for the concerns of academic psychologists and neurologists may, in turn, be justified in terms of their relevance for practice.

3.27 The metaphor of territoriality, although it is a considerable over-simplification, reminds us that the accounts which are employed in order to make sense of children's problems arise in human situations where, at times, their truth and value is likely to be distorted. It is part of the purpose of Units 11–14 to assess the appropriateness and range of application of such accounts. Until 11 examined the scope and limitations of biological knowledge in special education. In that unit, Patricia Potts looked at how the use of biological knowledge of impairment as an attempt to understand physical and sensory handicap was over-extended in the cases of 'hyperactivity' and 'dyslexia'. But, more importantly, she demonstrated how little of educational significance could be gained

from medical knowledge of an impairment. Medical knowledge plays a relatively small part in defining the educational characteristics and learning needs of a handicapped child. The limited role for biological knowledge in understanding handicap is a consequence of its social nature. For a handicap arises for a child with an impairment when the meaning and consequences of that impairment involve a personal burden. The personal significance of an impairment is heavily dependent on social circumstance.

3.28 Will Swann examined psychological accounts of handicap in Unit 12. These are often expressed in terms of faulty development, limited intelligence or an inappropriate 'reinforcement' history. Such accounts offered lacked a distinctly 'psychological' character. On the one hand, biological limitation was used to account for incompetence measured by IQ tests. On the other, subnormality could be seen as a statistical artifact created for the convenience of educational administrators. The 'transactional' view of developmental psychologists, for whom developmental processes are the result of an interaction between bodies and environments (see Reading 1.5 in the Reader), and approaches derived from learning theory share a common strength and weakness. Both stress the importance of the 'environment' in determining development, but both leave the notion of environment undefined. The world encapsulated by the simple word 'envrionment' is a complex place indeed. It contains mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, mortgages and bank balances, industrialists, politicians, schools, factories, social classes and racial divides. To understand the way the 'environment' affects development we have to comprehend the nature and influence of society.

3.29 If psychological ideas do not provide us with a distinctive set of explanations it does not follow that another discipline, sociology for example, can succeed in that task. There have been several recent attempts to propose a distinctly sociological view of special education which emphasizes the part played by social structures in the formation of the categories and consequences of handicap. In her book on educational subnormality, Sally Tomlinson noted that 'tautological accounts are, interestingly, quite frequent amongst professionals' (Tomlinson, 1981, p. 16). In these cases psychologists would justify a referral to an ESN(M) school by saying that a child was *in need of special education*. She constrasts professional accounts with a sociological account which 'must begin by taking professional accounts of categorization as problematic, and must attempt to produce alternative coherent accounts that are recognizably sociological' (Tomlinson, 1981, p. 17). She falls prey then to unacknowledged circularity—a further feature, it might seem, of the actions of professionals *or* academics anxious to stake out their territorial claims.

3.30 The notion of distinct perspectives on the causation of handicap, each with their own sphere of influence, paradoxically leads to a false assessment of the power of the 'clinical perspective' to give an explanation of handicap. Children and adults live within a network of institutions created within a set of economic, political and cultural relations. In order to grasp the meaning or significance of their actions we have to understand them in their context. And it is that context which shapes the nature of a person's handicap, irrespective of the extent or nature of their impairment, incompetence or deviance. I am inclined to call the investigation and understanding of people in a special educational context the 'study of' rather than the 'psychology of' or 'sociology of' special education.

Summary

3.31 In this section, I have looked at the way the handicaps experienced by individuals are exacerbated or caused by the way people react to them. Handicaps may be created when a person fails to live up to the norms of her society or social group. Handicaps are always defined in relation to some standard. I looked at some attempts to dislodge a core of hard biological handicaps from a wider group said to be social in origin but found that this was a false quest. For the experience of people can only be understood in their social context. Physical defects or disabilities do not carry a personal label informing their possessor about how they should be experienced; meaning is always derived in interactions with other people. Sometimes the reactions of other people produce such a culturally co-ordinated picture that handicap is experienced as a complete ready-to-wear identity. It may be so difficult to reject the handicapped persona that the only end is acquiescence to it.

4 *The production of failure and disaffection*

4.1 Children are regarded as failures or as disruptive when they do not match up to a standard of achievement or behaviour. Their categorization tells us more about the rules and values of the institution (or social system) in which they are categorized than it does about the pupils themselves. Any attempt to remedy the problems of individuals which does not seek to understand the institutional context in which those problems arise is doomed. This is not a suggestion which can be dismissed as sociological theory. Some schools are organized in such a way that they always have a single child or group of children with whom they cannot cope. If educational psychologists arrange for the removal of the troublesome child, it may only promote the 'discovery' of a new case. Such a practice may be fostered by a member of staff with responsibility for negotiating with outside agencies and arranging for pupil transfers from the school. 'A teacher in charge of deviance' may be engaged, according to John Sayer, head of Banbury school, in a search for 'divine victims' to account for the failings of a school. Another head teacher in a Scottish community school argued against the setting up of units for disruptive pupils on the ground that 'teachers are only human. They'll always be able to find ten more pupils they would be happier without'.

4.2 In this section I will look at some of the ways schools can create problems in children. I could have done the same with another major socializing force on children, the family. The way in which families can abuse and destroy the children in them is well known. Children can be rejected and or made to feel incompetent. They can be physically and psychologically assaulted. They may be assailed by constant shouting and argument and may arrive at school shattered and unable to make the mental break from their home conditions. We know that families have power to mould not only the emotional futures of their children but also their patterns of educational achievement. In comparison, schools are often thought to play a minor role, and a long debate has been conducted in journals and books between protagonists of this view and those who suggest that schools make a considerable impact on the differences in emotional state, attitudes, behaviour and educational attainments between their pupils. I will return to that dispute in Unit 14 when I reconsider the extent to which schools can change to promote integration and reduce educational difficulties.

4.3 I will start by looking at a number of criticisms of schools, each of which embodies an account of the contribution of schools to the development of educational difficulties. I suggest that you keep these critiques in mind while you read the rest of the section. I will then look at the processes of control of pupils and knowledge and the differences in perspective of teachers and pupils through which school values and norms are made apparent. I will consider the way such differences give rise to false or inadvisable labelling of pupils and the difference such labels can make to the lives of students. Finally I will ask whether the processes which give rise to disaffection are the same as those which lead to the exclusion of 'disruptive', 'maladjusted' and physically and mentally handicapped students from ordinary schools.

What's wrong with schools?

> In Tole End Road there's a garage, and I used to work part-time there and . . . there's an elderly fellow there, been a mechanic all his life, and he must have been seventy years of age then. He was an old Hammer town professional, been a professional boxer once, an elderly chap and he was a practical man, he was practical, right? . . . and he told me this [. . .] 'This chap was all theory and he sends away for books about everything', and he says, 'Do you know', he says, 'he sent away for a book once and it came in a wooden box, and it's still in that box 'cos he can't open it?' Now that in't true is it? But the point is true. That in't true, that didn't happen, but his point is right. He can't get at the book 'cos he don't know how to open the box! Now what's the good of that?
>
> (Willis, 1977, p. 57)

4.4 In Units 1/2, I identified three lines of criticism of schools: the conservative, liberal and radical critiques of education. According to the conservative critique, schools are insufficiently devoted to the generation of relevant knowledge in their students and too soft on discipline. *Relevant* knowledge is defined on this view in terms of a *traditional* curriculum handed down by generations of teachers. According to the liberal critique, children fail or are disaffected because schools and teaching are not sufficiently geared to the needs, interests and background of their pupils. Greater opportunity and achievement are seen as emerging through educational reform. Both the liberal and radical critiques of education recognize the existence of a hidden curriculum designed to establish control and conformity beside the official curriculum of school knowledge. They differ in their accounts of the extent to which reform of education can be achieved and the means by which change can occur. The radical critique, then, describes the major functions of schooling as largely determined by the political and economic structures of society which ensures the reproduction of success and failure and the irrelevance of schooling to the lives of many students as well as teachers. Michael Apple is one of the exponents of this view and according to him: 'Just as in the "economic market place" where it is more efficient to have a relatively constant level of unemployment, to actually generate it really, so do cultural institutions "naturally" generate deviance and levels of poor achievment' (Apple, 1980, p. 119). Real change, therefore, requires a new political and social order.

4.5 The radicals see schooling largely as a reproducer of a particular system, marshalling students for certain kinds of employment or unemployment.

> Schools seem to do a number of things. They are reproductive organs in that they do help select and certify a work force . . . They help maintain privilege in cultural ways by taking the form and content of the culture and knowledge of powerful groups and defining it as legitimate knowledge to be preserved and passed on . . . schools hence are also agents in the creation and recreation of an effective dominant culture.
>
> (Apple, 1980, p. 116)

4.6 What we call the 'hidden curriculum' was quite openly espoused during the development of mass schooling as was described in Unit 8. It is now possible to talk of an *official* hidden curriculum in which further major features of the process of schooling are ignored. Teachers' pursuit of advancement and inter-staff disputes form a large part of their discussions of school life, but are rarely written down. The extent to which schools form a social arena for teachers and pupils is similarly underplayed.

4.7 Much of E241 conforms to a liberal critique of education, though I do not want to overemphasize the usefulness of such distinctions and the labelling they may encourage. A series of government reports on education place official rhetoric, at least, also within the boundaries of this position, and I suggest you look at the summaries of these reports in the *Glossary*. The Newsom, Plowden, Bullock and Warnock Reports all advocated greater attention to be paid to the needs of students. HMI's report, *Aspects of Secondary Education in England* (DES, 1979), argued that secondary schools were too dominated by examinations, employed over-directed teaching, and emphasized factual recall rather than the understanding of ideas. A DES discussion paper on teacher training argued that

> schools have gone to great lengths to develop pastoral structures and organization but there is a need for equal emphasis on producing a curriculum that will encourage rather than stifle the pupils' personal development . . . a pupil's difficulties may arise from a lack of match between the curriculum he is experiencing and the needs he will face when he leaves school.
>
> (DES, 1981, p. 13)

A series of reports in Scotland have gone further. *The Progress Report on Pupils with Learning Difficulties* (SED, 1979) argued that it was the curriculum in schools which was 'the cause and potential cure of the majority of learning difficulties'.

4.8 It is during the inculcation of the hidden curriculum that a value is placed on the attainment and behaviour of pupils and as a result they may become branded as 'failures' or 'disruptive'.

Is there a pupil critique of education?

> The kids should have a say in what goes on at school . . . not just a selected few, the big brains . . . what about the ones they call rough and ready and the ones who are not good? They should say what's wrong . . . cos teachers look at the teacher's point of view, not just other people's . . . the kids have to be there and I'm sure they'd want to make it best for themselves.
>
> ('Toni' in Grunsell, 1980, p. 32)

4.9 In their study, Bird *et al.* (1981) assumed that disaffection in pupils could be interpreted as a critique of schooling:

> From working closely with pupils it became clear that however teachers might define and respond to deviant behaviour, pupils had their own point of view. Most disaffected behaviour could best be understood as an implied, if inarticulate, critique of schooling. If pupils felt critical of school because they had different family values or because they aspired to different futures from those advocated by the school, then they had comparatively few means of expressing that criticism. They could only stay away, be disruptive or withdraw and not participate. The objective of the research with pupils was to look behind the behaviour which caused the teachers so much concern in order to understand the pupils' critique of schooling.
>
> (Bird *et al.*, 1981, p. 9)

4.10 The problems and difficulties of the pupils were related to four main areas: a clash in values between the school and the pupil's family; a juggling of identity between school, part-time work, family and social life; a rejection of the relevance of schooling to the current or future life of the student; and conflicts over methods and mechanisms of control.

4.11 Faced with the reality of disaffection, every school set out to reduce it and they used a variety of methods. But all of them took 'the substance of school for granted': its aim to provide pupils with credentials through a curriculum largely based on academic knowledge. Two of the principal methods for reducing disaffection identified by Bird *et al.* were 'leakage' and 'bartering'. Leakage, particularly applied to truancy and absence from lessons as well as withdrawal within them, was simply to ignore disaffection. Bartering, applied to more obviously disruptive behaviour, was a tacit settlement by teachers and pupils to make fewer demands on each other.

4.12 In the conclusion to their study, the authors argue:

> We suggest that schools, in seeking to respond to pupil disaffection, should reconsider their short term strategies of leakage and bartering and attempt to hear the pupil voices which disaffected behaviour may be seeking to express . . .
>
> (Bird *et al.*, 1981, p. 120)

4.13 The pupil critique turns out to be the injunction to 'hear the pupil voice' which has to be included at the start of policy change for disaffected pupils. But we cannot expect to find a coherent, consensus view of education emanating from pupils or their families or their teachers. Different pupils hold different points of view, and many of them are highly conservative. If the views and interests of pupils are taken as a starting point, it is possible to arrive at a variety of challenges to the current state of education. The one actually portrayed in a particular study is as likely to reflect the views of its author as of its subjects.

4.14 There can be no single or simple answer to the question: what makes a good school? As you read through this section it is up to you to formulate your own views about the directions schooling might take.

Criticizing schools and blaming teachers

4.15 In a recent article, McNamara criticized a number of other writers for 'banality' and the 'outsiders' arrogance', particularly in formulating the way schooling appeared to pupils. Such writings failed to capture the job of teaching;

> Teachers have only limited resources in order to achieve the various moral and academic goals expected from them by society. Resource limitations refer not only to finance materials and time but include the teachers' own reserves of energy, enthusiasm and personal commitment. Teachers are also beset by time-tabling and space constraints which shape their activity. Finally, classrooms contain children who may be willing or not so willing learners; the teacher must continually respond to and monitor their requests, needs, learning difficulties and behaviour.
>
> (McNamara, 1981, p. 124)

4.16 But there is not a unified teacher defence of education any more than there is a coherent pupil critique. There are disaffected teachers as well as disaffected pupils, and few schools have a consensus of opinion about how the school should be run. There are probably as many discordant schools as there are unharmonious families. To criticize schools effectively we have to recognize the constraints on all their participants. It is only by gaining an accurate picture of the way they function that we may be able to understand how to change them.

Conformity and control in education

4.17 Uri Geller was treated with awe because of an apparent ability to bend spoons by his mental powers, without obvious use of physical force. Yet each one of us possesses an equally remarkable power, for we can bend spoons any time we wish and, more relevantly, do much else besides. In an episode of *Dr Who*, the Doctor berated a group of women called the sisterhood with the remark, 'Oh, you're not still practising psycho-kinesis, are you? Why don't you go and get yourself a decent forklift truck?' In the face of the human ability to transform the world at will, societies have developed elaborate systems to co-ordinate and control their citizens. That this order is itself magical and precarious is demonstrated by the 1981 riots in England and the events in Poland of the same year, as well as being illustrated in the film *If*. . . . Some degree of stability in the life of social institutions is essential to enable citizens to develop their potential. Yet it is only through the creation of their world that their full human powers can be utilized. We have to decide on the desirable balance between the enabling and constraining features of our social institutions.

4.18 Teachers are often actively involved in teaching their students that the way things are is the way they should be, that social facts are concrete and immutable. The students too will come to give explanations of why some things can or can't be done in terms of the constraints of 'the system'. But the discovery that social facts can be altered is something many children make at a very early age; when they play with language and detach the name of an object and apply it to something else; when they dress up and assume a variety of identitites. In contrast, many adults find it extremely difficult or unsettling to depart from the unwritten rules of social life.

4.19 Schools are inevitably involved in the creation and maintenance of social order in that they transmit a common culture. Out of all the possible ways of living together the options favoured by the social institutions of the UK are very limited. It is this creation of normality or conformity which serves as the basis for the recognition and creation of deviance. The conformity demanded of the participants in some schools and places of work is quite staggering, a phenomenon I reflected on during a recent visit to the doctor. I went on a morning when the temperature was well below zero. When I arrived I found a group of men and women standing outside. The door had inadvertently been left closed. Presumably they were not in the best of health, yet none of them knocked on the door to escape from the bitter weather. I suggested to the woman at the front that she try the bell but she was reluctant to do that because she 'wouldn't like to get into trouble'. I went to the front of the queue, pressed the bell and the group were allowed in. I did not discover how long this group of people were prepared to stand shivering, but then frostbite was beginning to set in. In looking at rule-breaking, it is customary to attempt to discover explanations for deviance. In many circumstances it is more interesting to account for conformity.

4.20 Schools are sometimes portrayed as containing two groups of combatants each seeking the submission of the other, as in Delamont's book on interaction in the classroom where one chapter is entitled 'Let battle commence: strategies for the classroom' (Delamont, 1976). I do not intend to give an elaborate account of the nature of discipline in schools but to illustrate two features of teachers' control: of the behaviour of pupils and the information pupils receive. As things are, a single teacher is expected to guide the activities of a large group of children unaided. In his study of infant classrooms, Ronald King recorded the controls on teachers as well as pupils:

> Miss Fox and Miss Baker used forms of bureaucratic control over their teachers. At the Langley school they were required to produce a plan of work for each half term. At Seaton Park they had to complete a weekly report handed in each Monday morning. The headmistresses used these in their evaluations. From my observations there sometimes seemed only a slight resemblance between what happened in the classroom and what was either grandly planned or shortly reported. Many teachers acknowledged this, and regarded the plan or report mainly as a slightly bothersome written exercise to be completed in the required form and with correct spelling.
>
> (King, 1979, pp. 73–4)

4.21 But the consequences of the teachers losing control of the pupils were of more immediate impact. In extreme cases it could lead to unemployment.

> Much of the time the children behaved as if they were in the playground. Mrs White used very little public voice but even when she shouted they took little notice of her. She used little eye-gaze and the children seldom looked at her. Getting them ready for PI or to go home took a long time and she was sometimes reduced to physically pushing and even lifting children about. Several children took no notice of her requests or orders and she ignored their ignoring. On several occasions children went missing from the room.
>
> Mrs White's colleagues were quietly sympathetic towards her. To them she was a reminder of the necessity for effective social control and of the fragile nature of the social order of the classroom. In Mrs White's classroom it was the pupils who had most power to define the situation. Mrs White left the school and teaching the following year.
>
> (King, 1979, p. 57)

4.22 In the schools King studied, teachers effectively orchestrated classroom activities for most of the time. When a child did start deciding things for herself, the teacher had to make a series of decisions to regain control, often involving the saving of appearances to the class as a whole until her real supremacy could be reasserted.

> The chances were high for teachers to realize their will, but sometimes an individual child could effectively resist. David brought his own book to school and was pleased to have it read by the teacher. Later she asked him three times to clear up his table. In a temper he tore up his book. His teacher decided not to stop him because, as she told me later, she thought she couldn't. Later he knocked over a display on the nature table which the teacher chose to ignore. The next day she ignored a number of other incidents for fear of another 'tantrum'. At playtime he insisted he didn't want to go out. She saved the situation by saying, 'All right, David, you can stay in and tidy up.' For a few days it was his definition that prevailed and the real consequence was that the teacher did what he wanted her to.
>
> The chance element in the exercise of power means that all forms of social control are slightly tenuous. For most teachers this was not a serious problem, even though they were responsible for thirty or more children carrying out many different activities in a classroom stocked with many things, and where the potential for chaos was enormous. Even in doing music and movement or PE they felt their control to be quite secure. However, their view of its slightly tenuous, even mysterious, nature was shown in their difficulty in explaining why although everything went as they wanted it to most of the time, sometimes, without their obviously doing anything different, their expectations were not met. They posed several 'theories' to explain the 'off days'. 'It's either me or some of them got out of the wrong side today.' Weather theories were very common. Wind was supposed to make the children excitable. Rain, which kept them in at playtime, made them restless. Cold kept them quiet.
>
> (King, 1979, p. 49)

Learning what is taught

In gaining control of the children as they entered school teachers relied on the transmission of the ways of the classroom from child to child. But the organization of learning activities were inextricably mixed into this process so that the pupils saw what they learned as depending on the teachers initiative.

> In each school children were received into the reception classes either individually or in small groups. With a few exceptions these were mixed-age classes, so that new children entered a group all of whom had previous experience of the classroom and the teacher. From the teacher's point of view these arrangements were advantageous in 'getting them settled in quickly' or, in different terms, their accepting her authority and definition of the situation.
>
> I observed Tina on her first day at the Seaton Park school. She was the only newcomer that day and was brought by her mother half an hour after school started, and when the rest of the class were already busy. The teacher immediately gave her a piece of paper to draw on, and kept 'an eye on her' for most of the day. Tina looked around a great deal at the other children, and from time to time caught the eye of the teacher. At milk time she finished her crisps last of all. She ran to the teacher: 'I've finished my crisps.' 'OK, my dear, put the bag over there.' They listened to a story on record. Tina said something to a girl close to her. 'Do you know this story, Tina?' Tina nodded to the teacher's question. During singing time she did not join in the clapping at the teacher's signal, but after she had seen the other children clap. She took her drawing to the teacher, having seen others do so, and received her approval: 'Very nice.' Throughout the day Tina's experience was that the teacher commented upon her actions and told her what to do. Furthermore, she saw most of the other children being treated in the same way and generally responding to the teacher's requests. The authority of the teacher was demonstrated, as was its acceptance by the other children, and she accepted it too. When I asked children why they were doing something they usually said, 'Because teacher told me to.'
>
> (King, 1979, pp. 48–9)

4.23 As children progress through the school years, this takeover of their activities may become more obvious. In the Brunel study (Bird *et al.*, 1981), one child commented, 'It's one of my favourite subjects, drawing. I used to have them all over the school, but Art, I don't like that':

> Pictures drawn or painted became pieces of work making up an art folder. Stories became 'essays' of a particular length, and the opportunities for practical experience in looking after young children or familiarization with car engines are metamorphosed into CSE Mode III Child Care or Motor Vehicle studies. The few pupils who expect and want only to 'learn by doing' may well, by the end of the fourth year, be alienated from every subject in their timetable.
>
> (Bird *et al.*, p. 42)

Reading Now read Case study 32, 'Pleasing teacher'.

Comment In this sketch of an infant classroom Patience Tuckwell describes in detail the results of the processes to which Ronald King drew attention. Some pupils regain control over their own education because they make themselves *at home* in the classroom. To others, classroom knowledge remains alien and mysterious; it is the property of the teachers.

Control by examination

4.24 Most teachers have experienced the transformation in the attitude of pupils when they are given *a test*; even the most recalcitrant pupils may move into line temporarily as their worth is assessed. Public examinations may control the education of pupils in further ways. They may determine the nature of the curriculum and hence decrease the likelihood that learning in school is related to pupils' interests. In providing access to qualifications and jobs they may serve as an especially potent method of discipline for *some* students. This controlling function of public examinations is altering as a result of rising unemployment though the precise effect of the change may differ from pupil to pupil. In her survey of disruptive units, Basini (1981) found teachers producing contrasting views of the effects of unemployment on 'disruption':

> One head saw discontent especially among 'black kids', of whom 98 per cent are British born, because they could not get good jobs and in a growing number of cases remained unemployed. Another head disagreed that the economic situation made it harder to motivate pupils. He stated that . . . 'we are in a much stronger position now in that we can stress to the kids that they are going to need a reference and examination qualification to land a job'.
>
> (Basini, 1981)

4.25 But the promise of being a good student fails to hold the attention of all pupils. It promotes the goal of success but may lead pupils to define the content of success for themselves. One child described his views of this process to Rob Grunsell:

> 'I really tried in my first year . . . I wanted to be hard like the rest of them but only in playtime.' Soon enough, however, he felt he had to make a choice. 'When I did my work they used to say, "Very good, Raymond, you're doing well," and then when I got to the second year I saw they were doing that to all the kids—not just me—it was just a testing ground, tick, tick, tick. They used to give you a cross and then say, "At least, you tried," and scrub the cross out . . . I didn't believe I was really doing good'. Being merely one of a modestly successful minority was not enough: he needed special status. In a mock school report voice, Raymond commented, 'I brought my playground antics into the classroom because I didn't believe what the teachers were saying and I wanted to know why they were lying'.
>
> (Grunsell, 1980, p. 58)

4.26 A similar process occurred in the families of pupils in the Brunel study. Families were sometimes openly hostile to the aims of the school but more often they would only swing against the school once things started to go wrong. They supported the school if and while their children were successful but as soon as they began to fail they stepped in with reassurance and the offer of a future independent of academic success.

4.27 But failure and disaffection may be more directly linked, particularly when pupils discover they are neither entered for examinations nor given a satisfactory alternative. Gow and McPherson have edited a collection of pupils' comments on the school leaving years in Scottish secondary schools. Several students commented on the absence of education if they did not make the O grade classes: 'My last year at school I was put into a class entitled May leavers. It consisted of pupils who were not sitting exams, so instead of trying to help us they put us all together and formed what they called ML and what we called the Rowdies' (Gow and McPherson, 1980, p. 30).

4.28 Many children do not become actively disruptive when they fail to find a place for themselves in the ethos of their schools. One girl hoped that the situation would improve by the time her children went to school:

> I want to see in later education, pupils and teachers being a sort of family. When I was at school my teachers made me feel thick, really stupid, so I did not bother to study, they made me feel as if it was not worth my while thinking of what I wanted to be. I had my heart set on being a child nurse but I have no confidence in myself anymore so I shall never forget my teachers and how they made me feel. I hope when I have my children they will be encouraged as I don't want them to be hurt like me.
>
> (Gow and McPherson, 1980, p. 31)

Differing perspectives

4.29 When the psychologist Piaget began his studies of child development in the 1920s, he did something which at that time was quite novel. He attempted to reconstruct the world from the point of view of the child. Ironically, many of the criticisms of Piaget now claim that he did not go far enough. The tasks he used to assess the world view of children were artificial and did not reflect their true competence. But the implication for education was clear: teaching had to be adjusted so that the curriculum could be absorbed by the child. The idea that education could be viewed from more than one point of view or perspective and that some effort had to be made for pupils and teachers to reach a shared perspective has a long history. In terms of intellectual tasks the message

was straightforward although, as you may know, it was not always heeded; match the curriculum to the capacities and interests of children; give the child greater control over the pace and content of her learning. However, it was in the area of the cultural and moral curriculum of the school that perhaps least progress has been made. I have selected a few examples to illustrate the gap that often exists between the minds, homes and culture of teachers and pupils. Children who fail in school or become disaffected are usually those for whom this gulf is widest. This correlation cannot, of itself, provide evidence of the direction of causation yet it is clear that teaching and learning are unlikely to start where such a gap exists. One explanation of the gap between pupils and teachers is that teachers come to have false expectations of the capacities of their pupils and hence cause them to 'underachieve' in school. They exacerbate delinquency and disruption in a similar way by sticking labels on pupils they regard as deviant. I will look briefly at these views and suggest that while what teachers think of pupils may be important, it is what they *do* on the basis of these thoughts that may have more lasting consequences.

Activity 3 Now look at the following two newspaper reports which appeared in *The Guardian* on successive days. They concern two 'deviant' boys who died of carbon monoxide poisoning after they had fitted a connector between the exhaust pipe and the inside of their car and had closed all the windows.

What do the reports suggest about the differing perspectives of students, parents and teachers? Is it possible to be deviant and serious in one's intentions? Could there be a connection between a student's perception of the future and his or her attitude to school and other social conventions?

A further report appeared in *The Guardian* (17 December 1981). Whose definition of reality does it support?

Unemployed teenagers committed suicide

By a Staff Reporter

Two teenagers who lost their jobs committed suicide together and left a note in which they said: "What have we left to live for now there is no work for anyone? All teenagers have to do is hang around street corners getting moved on by police who think you are up to something."

At an inquest in Warrington yesterday, the Central Cheshire Coroner, Mr John Hibbert, blamed the economy for their deaths. "These two boys had the courage to take their own lives. It is not an easy thing to do, but they felt the world didn't hold a future for them."

Graeme Rathbone and Sean Grant, both aged 19, lived near each other in Widnes. Graeme was a store room labourer and Sean drove a fork-lift truck until both lost their jobs. Then they were charged with causing criminal damage with a graffiti spray.

On May 7 they took a stolen car on to the banks of the river Mersey near Widnes, ran a pipe from the exhaust into one of the windows, and left the engine running. They died of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Recording a suicide verdict yesterday Mr Hibbert said: "This is a clear result of the economic situation in this country. It looks to me as if there are going to be more cases like this where youngsters who have not got jobs feel the only way out is to take their own lives."

The inquest was told that Sean had left £21 and a note explaining that "this is for mum, dad and the kids." His father, Mr William Grant, said afterwards: "Sean was very depressed because he was out of work."

In their joint note the boys said: "The way this country is going no one will be able to get jobs. That's why the young are turning to crime and violence. What else is left? We've not got much time to live now. But whatever happens to us doesn't matter. It's the rest of you we feel sorry for."

Graeme's mother, Mrs Betty Rathbone, told the inquest that she had often found her son sitting crying in the kitchen. "He always used to say there was nothing left. He had no job and there was no future. He was very depressed about being out of work but I didn't think it would end like this."

She said later that she hoped the Government would "pay a lot of attention to what has happened" and would do all it could for the unemployed. Sean's father added: "I hope that mums and dads throughout the country get closer to their families so that a tragedy like this never happens again."

The two boys were due to appear at Widnes magistrates' court to face the criminal damage charges, but they died before the case was heard.

Headmaster disputes verdict on suicides

By Nick Davies

A dispute broke out yesterday over the death of two unemployed teenagers who were said by a coroner to have committed suicide because they had no work.

Their former headmaster said that the coroner's conclusion was "absolutely ridiculous" and suggested that they might have died because of a prank which went wrong. A local police officer described the two boys as "well-known layabouts."

The coroner, Mr John Hibbert, stood by his conclusion and was supported by the parents of the boys and by the Shadow spokesman on Employment, Mr John Grant, who suggested that the two teenagers represented the tip of an iceberg.

Graeme Rathbone, known as "Raffy," and Sean Grant, both aged 19, were found dead in a stolen car on the banks of the river Mersey near their home town of Widnes on May 6. They had lain down along the seats with a pipe from the exhaust running into one window. They died of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Graeme had been driving a fork lift truck at a plastics firm, Monopol, in Penketh near Warrington. Friends say that he had had the job for several years and that it was kept open for him while he served a short sentence in a detention centre. He was made redundant last September.

Sean had been working as a gas bottle filler for the Widnes firm of Nazedo, a subsidiary of the Hugh Lewis group. He began work there in June 1980 on a work experience scheme and was subsequently taken on as a regular employee. He was made redundant on April 17.

The two boys were well known in the area, if only because of their obsession with painting "Raffy and Sean" on any available flat surface. Their death has not stopped the appearance of the graffiti. Some now read: "Raffy and Sean. RIP."

They were due to appear in court to face charges of causing criminal damage arising out of an incident at a garage where £8,000 worth of damage was done with paint. A Widnes police officer said: "There was constant trouble with these two. It was going on all the time. They were well-known in the area for being layabouts."

Their former headmaster, Mr David Blacow, said: "I think their deaths resulted from a prank that went wrong. They struggled for jobs, but no more so than any other boys." He said that Graeme had drifted in and out of jobs and that Sean had had a job until the week before he died.

The coroner, who sits at Warrington, rejected Mr Blacow's views. He said that he had no doubt that the suicide note, in which the boys complained of life on the dole, had been correctly reconstructed by Graeme's family. The inquest heard that his mother had been so upset when she first read it that she burned it.

"I am still positive that unemployment was the reason why they did it, although I accept that two other boys in exactly the same circumstances would not have made the same decision," he said. He dismissed the idea that they might have died through a prank. "A certain amount of preparation goes into something like this. It's not a split-second thing."

Suicide youth's brother gaoled for school arson

The brother of a youth who committed suicide was gaoled for three years yesterday after pleading not guilty to setting fire to the school which his brother had once attended.

Chester Crown Court heard during a week-long trial that Derek Rathbone, aged 32, married with two sons, of Widnes, had led 20 youths on a night-time raid on the science block at Fairfield School in Widnes, Cheshire.

The attack, which caused damage estimated at £100,000, took place after the school's headmaster, Mr David Blacow, criticised inquest comments on two youths who committed suicide.

Two former pupils, Graeme Rathbone and Sean Grant, found dead in a fume-filled car, left a note blaming their suicide on their despair at being unemployed.

Two other men were gaoled — James Gorman, aged 20, of Widnes, for 15 months after being found guilty of arson, and Stuart Knight, aged 26, also of Widnes, for six months after admitting criminal damage.

Reading Now read Case study 31, 'Ordinary secondary school; what its students say'.

Comment (a) To many teachers and many parents the views expressed in this case study represent a familiar critique of schools and life in general: 'it's boring'. Depending on *their* own views, it may confirm either the futility of much of the school curriculum or the propensity of pupils to moan about their lessons irrespective of what they really think of them.

(b) It may take more than just a simple change of lessons to reclaim the interest of these pupils, as Peter Woods found in his study:

> There used to be a 'non-examination' form at this school in the fourth and fifth years, and their education during these years was seen by the students (and some of the teachers) as boring, meaningless and irrelevant. One class of fifth year non-examination boys was given the task of repairing and making functional two dilapidated glasshouses. It took them a whole term. They destroyed them in the space of five minutes shortly after completing the task. I could only interpret this as a comment on the pointlessness of their being at school.
>
> (Woods, 1982, p. 13)

(c) The suggestion that schools might recognize the perspective of pupils and their families can be taken to an extreme, to become a form of educational imperialism where no corner of pupils' lives is safe from inclusion in a 'relevant' curriculum. Providing a 'relevant' curriculum can be seen, too, as a tactic very much under the control of teachers which defers the time when pupils recognize the irrelevance of schooling or examinations to their future.

(d) For some pupils, being asked them about the content of lessons in school implies that they are approached from the perspective of teachers. A girl in Brunel (Bird *et al.*, 1981) claimed that she liked school but did not like lessons! Schools are also places where pupils go to meet their friends and have a laugh with them. Paul Willis reported a dialogue between the 'lads' (non-academic boys) on this subject where they are comparing what school means to them with what it means to the hardworking 'ear 'oles':

> *Spanksy* I mean, what will they remember of their school life? What will they have to look back on? Sitting in a classroom sweating their bollocks off, you know, while we've been . . . I mean look at the things we can look back on, fighting the Pakis, fighting on the jas [ie Jamaicans]. Some of the things we've done on teachers, it'll be a laugh when we look back on it.
>
> *Perce* Like you know, he don't get much fun, well say Spanksy plays about all day, he gets fun. Bannister's there sweating, sweating his bollocks off all day while Spanksy's doing fuck all, and he's enjoying it.
>
> *Spanksy* In the first and second years I used to be brilliant really. I was in 2A, 3A you know and when I used to get home, I used to lie in bed thinking, 'Ah, school tomorrow', you know, I hadn't done that homework, you know . . . 'Got to do it'.
>
> *Perce* Yeah that's right, that is.
>
> *Spanksy* But now when I go home, it's quiet, I ain't got nothing to think about, I say, 'Oh great, school tomorrow, it'll be a laugh', you know.
>
> *Will* You still never fucking come!
>
> *Spanksy* Who?
>
> *Will* You.
>
> [Laughter]
>
> (Willis, 1977)

One student expressed himself even more forcibly to Rob Grunsell after he had been suspended from school:

> And you speak to these social workers—they give you all this sociology bullshit they get from their books about how I was being a joker to attract attention . . . that's a load of bollocks. That wasn't what it was all about, I can tell you what it was all about. It was just trying to make school a bit more of a laugh than what it was. That's all it was.
>
> (Grunsell, 1980, p. 30)

(e) In the studies of pupil perspectives and youth culture the views of boys have predominated. This is partly to be explained by the interest researchers have in the social problems of delinquency and vandalism, truancy and school disruption. Boys make up the majority of such statistics. Working class girls no less than their brothers have a culture which is at odds with school values. Angela McRobbie (1978) called this the culture of femininity, dominated by friendships, fashion, popular music and romance, which increasingly dominates their minds and may prompt, according to Sue Sharpe (1976), a sudden drop in achievements as they approach school leaving age. McRobbie described the way these girls distanced themselves from their middle class school mates, gave up on school achievement yet still managed to 'transform the school into the sphere, *par excellence*, for developing their social life, fancying boys, learning the latest dance, having a smoke together in the lavatories and playing up the teachers' (McRobbie, 1978, p. 107).

Schooling the community

4.30 In many schools there is still an immense divide between the culture of the curriculum and the lives of pupils. The Open University course, E354, *Ethnic Minorities and Community Relations*, documents this issue and the scope for its resolution. I will give brief examples of the existence of national and class disparities in educational expectations so that you can assess their relevance in special education. In their study of disaffected pupils, Bird *et al.* (1981) gave brief portraits of 'disaffected pupils' whose family values clashed with those of the school. Some, like Zena, viewed school as an escape from tight discipline:

> Zena's family were Greek Cypriot shop keepers. Zena liked going to school because it gave her more freedom than she was allowed at home, where girls were not allowed out except under supervision. Her liking for school, however, was confined to its social aspects. Zena related her lack of interest in academic work to her family values. She said that if she had been English she would probably have had to work much harder because she would have needed to get a job. As a Greek girl she would not have to seek employment, unless she chose to do so. Her father would be willing to keep her until she married and currently provided her with all the money she needed for clothes, make-up and records. She was considering entering the beauty business after leaving school. Her father was already paying for her elder sister to go to a private beauty college and planned to open a business for her later on. Zena thought she could work with her sister and learn the trade without bothering to go to college.
>
> (Bird *et al.*, 1981, p. 16)

Others went to great lengths to reconstruct their culture inside the schools walls:

> Like many of the other West Indian boys we interviewed, Leroy displayed a contradictory approach to school. He was highly motivated and keen to achieve four or five CSE passes so that he could enter a clerical job, but he did no work in school and spent his time enjoying the company of his friends. Leroy seldom truanted. The school was fairly thorough in its attendance monitoring and Leroy's mother, a major influence in his life, would not have brooked a truant for a son. Moreover, Leroy had reasons of his own for wanting to attend school.
>
> Leroy was the dominant character in a large network of West Indian boys who had been friendly for many years. Many of them had attended the same primary school, they lived near each other and frequented the same parties and clubs. At school they spent hours discussing music (they were interested in 'Dub', a particular form of reggae), dress, Rastafarianism, the politics of race and, of course, girls. Their strong group life was centred on school and Leroy was therefore seldom away, but the factors that encouraged Leroy's regular attendance simultaneously tempted him to miss lessons. He would often arrive for class ten, sometimes fifteen minutes late, and then make an excuse to leave again to find a book or deliver a message. While he was out of his lessons he would be chatting with his friends and chasing and talking to girls. In the first part of a lesson change, when it was more or less legitimate to be out on the corridors, he would talk to anyone he came across, but as time wore on and the majority of pupils found their way to their classes, Leroy and his friends would make their way to the boys' toilets which they used as a social centre, away from the eyes of teachers.

> Leroy was able, ingeniously, to exploit the school's weaknesses to make 'private time' for himself and his friends. The building's interminable twisting and turning stone staircases, some of which went nowhere at all, made it a warren, impossible to patrol, and large numbers of temporary buildings crowded into the school yard provided plenty of hiding places. Some teachers were apparently more easily duped than others and less inclined to scrutinise Leroy's excuses for absence or lateness. By getting to know his teachers and exploiting their foibles and idiosyncracies, he was able to create an 'alternative' timetable for himself. Although not absent from school, he spent a considerable amount of time absent from the control of his teachers and pursuing his own interests.
>
> (Bird *et al.*, 1981, p. 13)

4.31 In his study of infant schools, Ronald King found that the concern with control and the methods of gaining it were relatively similar in all the schools he studied but the pupils were very different. Burnley Road was designated as a social priority school and one of the teachers compared his experiences during teaching practice with his work in the school. Mr Green did his teaching practice in 'the posh suburbs', the 'stockbroker belt' of Manchester, where many children could read before they came to school and knew the rules of numbers. 'I'd just go in and write the date on the board, the children would arrive and get on with their work. I felt redundant. Here you have to make decisions all the time and work all the time. They bring nothing useful in the way of experience.'

4.32 The discordance in expectation between parents, children and teachers was illustrated by the attitude of the teachers to things from the children's homes which were brought into school, and most dramatically by the reaction of the teachers to the reception given by the parents to the Christmas concert:

> The toys and books that children brought to school from home were often not approved by the teachers, although they did not show this directly. Guns and tanks and other toys were kept in her drawer 'to keep them safe' and to prevent their being lost or stolen or giving rise to disruptive play. Disapproved annuals, often conspicuously second-hand even when recently received as a present, were politely admired but not read. When a trip was arranged to the Newbridge museum the teacher discovered that it was the first time that some of the class of six year olds had been into 'town', two miles away.
>
> The teachers' direct encounters with the parents, principally the mothers, were when they brought and collected the younger children either from the playground or classroom, and on special occasions such as Open Day or the Christmas Concert, after which I made the following notes:
>
> > Mothers wear cheap, sometimes dated, old and sometimes dirty clothes. Not casual clothing but 'dressed up' clothes. High heels, fancy boots, fur-collar coats. Some are heavily made up with unwashed hair.
> >
> > The adults and children of the audience are very noisy particularly when the performing children are talking. Some of the teachers show facial disapproval. (Mrs Brown says, 'They get furious.') One says, 'Shss.' Is it to the children, the parents or both? It doesn't work.
> >
> > Audience invited to join in 'Once in royal David's city'. They do not.
> >
> > Mrs Brown gives an address to the parents at the end of the performance. The noise continues. 'I expect our children enjoyed it more than you did because you were not able to hear the words.' There seems no audience reaction—is it meant for the teachers? She ends by saying, 'You can see why at Burnley Road it is necessary to train all these little ones to be quiet.' They laugh! I'm not sure it was meant as a joke. There was a kind of tight-lipped smile.
>
> (King, 1979, p. 91)

Labels and destinations

4.33 *Pygmalion in the Classroom* (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968) must be one of the most renowned books in teaching. All teachers have heard of the teacher expectancy effect, the self-fulfilling prophecy that breaks the promise of pupils. Its attraction is partly to do with the fact that the findings seem eminently sensible. If you regard someone as stupid then they may act stupidly. If you think of them as clever then they may come to act wisely. Rosenthal and Jacobson had told teachers in a school that some of their

pupils were 'bloomers', that they would develop considerably over the next months, and it was these children who indeed made considerable gains in scores on an IQ test, irrespective of their 'true' ability. One might doubt the appropriateness of an IQ test as a measure of the growth in attainment of pupils, yet the results of the study were attractive. They appeared to show that pupil performance could be improved by a simple change in the state of mind of the teachers:

> Nothing was done directly for the disadvantaged child at Oak school. There was no crash programme to improve his reading ability, no special lesson plan, no extra time for tutoring, no trips to museums or art galleries. There was only the belief that the children bore watching, that they had intellectual competencies that would in due course be revealed. What was done in our program of educational change was done directly for the teacher, only indirectly for her pupils.
>
> (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968, p. 181)

4.34 It is less well known that Rosenthal and Jacobson's study has been the subject of damning criticisms, particularly by Snow in 1969 who showed that the methods of assessment and statistical analyses were highly implausible. In 1973, Eysenck, an adherent of the view that differences in attainment could be explained largely by inheritance, seized on Snow's criticisms as discrediting the social determination of attainment and intelligence implied by the 'Pygmalion' study. However, he was unaware that Snow himself co-edited a book where the findings (though not the methods) of Rosenthal and Jacobson were supported. As one contributor remarked: 'the question for future research is not whether there are expectancy effects, but how they operate' (Baker and Crist, 1971, p. 64).

4.35 Accounts of the effects of teachers' expectations have emerged from a different direction. Within the sociology of education, a body of literature describes the way acts of rule-breaking by pupils are exacerbated by the reactions of teachers. In this process, isolated acts by pupils may be reflected back to them as a 'deviant' identity. Such accounts make up an approach to deviance called 'labelling theory' (see Hargreaves *et al.*, 1967, and Unit 17 of E200, *Contemporary Issues in Education*).

4.36 The idea of labelling covers a multitude of processes. It is the existence of a law requiring pupils between the ages of five and sixteen to be schooled that creates the possibility of truancy. The availability of the category ensures that there are some students to fill it. Calling a child a truant might have few consequences if it were largely descriptive —like a birdwatcher reporting that she's just seen another warbler. But the label 'truant' carries a negative evaluation; the truant is rule-breaking and breaking the rules is sinful. Even so, the attribution of sinfulness by a teacher held in low esteem by pupils might still be of little consequence if it did not call into play legal procedures, in the shape of educational officers and the courts and alternative educational arrangements: the truancy centre or disruptive unit.

Transmitting the label

4.37 Before a label can affect a child's life, it has to be communicated to her by word or action, and if it is solely by word she has to absorb its significance. This transmission process may be easier in some schools than others, such as small primary schools where the staff all know and therefore come to a shared view of a particular pupil, or in schools where one member of staff has the job of defining the value of the students. In her study of one girls' secondary school, Cathy Bird reflected on the different effects of teachers' views of the attainment and behaviour of pupils. Their educational value was brought home to pupils by streaming and setting procedures but the transmission of views about their behaviour was a haphazard process:

> In a modern comprehensive school, a teacher may see between 150 and 300 pupils during his working week. A pupil may be taught by up to 15 teachers during that same period of time. Classes change every hour or so and a teacher may be faced with a new teaching group and another classroom every time the bell rings for a new lesson. Because of these limitations on continuous teacher/pupil interaction, the actual amount of time available for a teacher to build up any kind of relationship or establish a label for a specific child is limited.
>
> (Bird, 1980, p. 95)

4.38 In the school in question, very few children were universally labelled as behaviour problems by all teachers, partly because there was only limited opportunity for teachers to share their labels with each other:

> a modern comprehensive school staff room may have up to 70 staff in it at any one time. Friendship patterns do not normally extend to more than a fraction of the total staff. Unless a child presents such a problem that a teacher deliberately sets out to talk about a child, then a teacher is likely to continue to see certain pupils in his own individual way.
>
> (Bird, 1980, p. 96)

4.39 In different classes with different systems of rules, different teacher styles and different personalities, children behaved differently. The pupils themselves saw their disruption as an individual response to individual lessons and teachers. Some did not attend lessons regularly enough to pick up the point of view of the teacher. In the school studied there was little suggestion of a low-ability delinquent group: 'every class had its clown but misbehaviour was in no way related to low academic ability'. While this may not have been true of the school Cathy Bird looked at, other schools do sometimes apply dual status to bottom streams or remedial groups. But Cathy Bird rejected the idea that the attitudes of teachers to pupil behaviour affected pupils' lives:

> For many pupils, then, deviant labelling is an inconsistent and often unimportant phenomenon in school. Rarely are labels generalized throughout all lessons with all teachers. Because of this few pupils see labelling as a matter of concern. While pupils may accept that they are seen as problems by certain teachers in certain lessons, they do not internalize deviant labels and do not embark on deviant careers as a consequence of that labelling.
>
> (Bird, 1980, pp. 102–3)

4.40 Cathy Bird did notice that the girls adopted the academic self-evaluation related to their sets or streams. They described themselves as 'thick' or 'average' or 'bright'. Even if misbehaviour does not have such uniform consequences within this school, a small group of children from most secondary schools find themselves excluded or suspended and do embark on a different, deviant career as a consequence.

Placing the label

Reading Now read Case study 33, 'Chalkway School; remedial department in the process of change'. This is a description of one school with its own characteristics and history. The study is illuminative rather than representative. It is an example of what *can* happen. What effects did the 'remedial' and 'near-remedial' labels have on children prior to the change in organization of the school? What differences was the change in organization likely to make?

Comment (a) What difference did placement make to the remedial group?

(i) They were taught together in a separate group.

(ii) They were taught in a separate place outside the main school for much of the time.

(iii) They were not involved in the setting system except for maths.

(iv) They did no French.

(v) They had less opportunity to gain information about their school. Whether this, their curriculum and placement could account for their lack of knowledge about and participation in school activities is not certain. But knowing about this lack of knowledge and participation could be a spur to action on the part of teachers.

(vi) They could not compete with other forms in sports events because of the small size of their form.

(vii) Their distinctive curriculum limited the possibilities for transfer.

(viii) Their labels were applied while they were still at primary schools and they did not have the same opportunity to develop in mixed ability classes as the rest of the students.

(ix) Some of the children were confused about the reason for placement, as were some members of staff. Placement provided them with an unclear identity.

(x) The form stood out as receiving most form points as a means of encouragement.

(xi) The children were, by and large, in a class they would prefer to be out of. There was a definite stigma attached to membership of the class. In the new intake, one child in a mixed ability form was selected by his classmates to find out from the deputy head if their form was the remedial form. Despite the rotation of numbers pupils made it their business to find out who was who.

(b) What difference did placement make to the near remedial group?

They were a separate group, aware of their distinct status, who had no French in their curriculum. They were confused about the criteria for placement and some were keen to distance themselves from their position as intermediate between the 'thicks' and the 'normals'.

(c) The difference made by the changeover:

The changeover clearly involved a shift to a more informal system of classification permitting easier change and transfer. Pupils in the so called mixed ability classes were set after the first term at school and there was a chance for pupils to be in the bottom set for everything and feel stigmatized in consequence.

4.41 In Ronald King's study, the children at Burnley Road were defined as 'slow in their progress and poor in their behaviour', and the school had an adjustment class for the particularly slow or maladjusted pupils, some of whom entered it when they arrived at the school. Of the fourteen pupils, ten were boys, for, according to their teacher, boys caused '90 per cent of the trouble in the school'.

> Mrs Black claimed the children felt no stigma about being in the class, which was always referred to as 'Mrs Black's class' or 'Class 14' (the room number). I found no evidence to contradict this or to suggest that other children in the school gave it special status. According to Mrs Black it was the parents of the children in the class who called it the 'daft class'.
>
> Some of the children did not proceed to the junior school but to the school for the educationally subnormal. This was on Mrs Black's recommendation, endorsed by the headteacher, the educational psychologist, and the medical officer, but with the final approval of the mother. After one had categorically turned down the offer for the 'daft school', Mrs Black began to take the mothers down to the ESN school in her car, to introduce them to the headteacher and show them around. She said they were impressed, and agreed with her that going there was in their child's best interests. One mother who had two children there already 'thinks she's putting their names down for Eton'.
>
> (King, 1979, p. 96–7)

4.42 At all the schools in the study—the 'eager to please children' of the predominantly professional neighbourhood of Langley School, the 'bouncy' and 'nice' children of the skilled manual workers at Seaton Park School, as well as Burnley School—the attainment and behaviour of the children was accounted for by the teachers in terms of the children's home background. At Burnley School:

> Most of the children were from large families (ten from families of more than five children) and tended to be the youngest. Mrs Black spoke of poor, exhausted mothers having to go out to work so that the last-born was most neglected. Some of the parents were described as ESN since it was 'known' that they had been pupils at the ESN school. Some children had physical handicaps which Mrs Black regarded as an extra 'burden' and not the basic cause of their 'problems'. These included epilepsy, mild deafness, and palate troubles, all medically certified.
>
> (King, 1979, p. 97)

4.43 The establishment of an adjustment class was a response to children who had *real* difficulties in coping with the demands of a *normal* infant school. Yet the gap between the community and its values and the education provided for it was large and worrying, and not easily resolved. How would you set about providing a community school for these children?

Disaffection and segregation; one process or two?

4.44 If disaffection arises in part as a response to schooling unsuited to the needs and interests of pupils, are there a further group of pupils, radically different in character, whose separation from comprehensive schools cannot be reinterpreted through the liberal critique of education? What about the extremely disruptive pupils who are the subject of suspension or exclusion procedures? We have already documented the rapid growth in provision for disruptive pupils in response to the numbers of pupils out of school because of suspensions (see Unit 1/2). There have been some attempts to portray a clinical picture of such pupils as if they displayed a 'disruption syndrome'.

> Davies and Maliphant, educational psychologists, open their research paper on 'refractory boys' with this character outline.
>
> > In many schools the presence of a 'hard core' of individuals who are not responsive to normal influences would be readily admitted. The characteristics of these individuals are:
> >
> > (1) They are not seen to profit from apparently unpleasant experience. Hence they are punished repeatedly for the same or similar misdemeanors.
> >
> > (2) They seem to lack the capacity to become involved in any close relationship and thereby preclude any positive advantage of working more closely with a teacher.
> >
> > (3) They seem unable to defer gratification of needs or to inhibit aggressive impulses. Hence they tend to become involved in truancy, theft, violent physical or verbal clashes with teacher or other pupils.
> >
> > (4) Although often socially adept they readily display suspicion of and hostility towards authority. Hence they are deceptively easy to get on with until they are frustrated. They may engage impulsively in anti-social behaviour without apparent instigation.
> >
> > The combination . . . creates a person who is particularly difficult to manage.
>
> The authors assume that the school represents a given set of 'normal influences' . . . Nowhere is it suggested or implied that the schools might be in any way involved in the 'creation' of these refractory individuals.
>
> (Grunsell, 1980, p. 46)

4.45 In the Brunel study, the pupils identified as disaffected by teachers could be divided into three groups: those who truanted, disrupted lessons, or took little part in them. But within these categories the range of activities of the pupils was vast. In the case of suspension from school, the routes are many and varied. Head teachers are given the right by local education authorities to suspend pupils for any cause they consider 'adequate' (Grunsell, 1980, p. 10):

> In Hertfordshire two boys suspended after an April Fools Day prank in assembly; in a Lewisham school a hundred pupils supended for requesting that the fifth year be allowed to wear longer hair; in Finchley two sixth form girls suspended for attending schools in boys uniforms as a protest against sexist literature in the school library. Incidents similar to these have, to my certain knowledge, occurred in Baxbridge schools during the last four years, but have not been considered worthy of suspension. We are brought back to a basic point: that there is no fixed set of standards by which disruptive behaviour can be defined. What is regarded by the staff of a 'quiet' rural comprehensive as intolerable misbehaviour may pass almost unnoticed in many inner urban schools.
>
> (Grunsell, 1980, p. 47)

4.46 But the children who actually end up in disruptive units do display some similarities. In Basini's study one head teacher commented, 'I know perfectly well that children who end up in the unit are going to be from rather disturbed families, probably from families of unskilled manual labourers, probably from the bottom quartile of ability' (Basini, 1981, p. 199). We also know that many of children in disruptive units in the multi-racial areas of large cities will be black and that this is disproportionate to their numbers in the school population (Grunsell, 1980, p. 36; Basini, 1981, p. 199). This happens despite the definite assertions on the part of teachers that there is no element of prejudice in the procedures. As another head remarked, 'We get no racial trouble here. I tell them I don't want any trouble. They are all God's children so to speak, and they better not

start that nonsense here. I come down on a kid like a ton of bricks if he says the teachers are picking on him because he is black . . .' (Basini, 1981, p. 200).

4.47 Even though apparent similarities conceal a huge difference in ability and background of the pupils, does the discovery of similarities in background support the view that disruption is caused by factors external to the school? If this were so, one might expect to find the schools with the poorest pupils, for example, suspending the most pupils. Rob Grunsell found evidence that this was not so: huge differences in suspension rates between schools could not be related to the characteristics of pupils. Such differences imply the following conclusion:

> If we accept as a fact that there are pupils deemed intolerably disruptive in some schools who would not necessarily be reckoned as uncontainable in others, then there can be little point in studying suspended pupils *except* in relation to the particular schools from which they were excluded.
>
> (Grunsell, 1980, p. 48)

4.48 Schools are implicated in the definition of disruption, which is to be seen as an interaction between a pupil, her school, family and community. But Rob Grunsell is willing to concede that others may be the subject of more objective forms of categorization.

> For schools to place a minority of their pupils elsewhere must be recognized as a public statement, a recognition of some sort of difference. But what the difference is, what distinguishes this minority in terms of need and type of personality from the majority who remain in school, is dangerously unclear. *Those taken out of the mainstream having been deemed maladjusted or educationally sub-normal have, at least, been the subjects of a standardized test procedure. The objectivity of the term maladjusted and* ESN *may be disputed, but at least there is an attempt made to measure behaviour in a consistent manner.* There isn't, and cannot be, the same consistency of definition for the category of pupils judged by the schools to be intolerably disruptive, since the judgements made are variable and subjective.
>
> (Grunsell, 1980, p. 114; my emphasis)

4.49 We have already seen that the notion of maladjustment presumes an interaction between a child and others and precludes a clinical definition. Rob Grunsell seems to have been taken in by the spurious objectivity of official referral procedures. If schools provide a flexible and appropriate curriculum to deal with failure or disaffection, then they can make a similar response to the physically handicapped and the mentally handicapped, as well as those categorized as disruptive. Despite the success of the off-site unit which he helped to run, Rob Grunsell still saw it as an inappropriate response to school difficulties:

> As an example of off-site provision, I have no reason to think the Springfield Unit in Baxbridge to be outstandingly good. Being housed in a rambling old school building created problems for staff: it made physical control of pupils more difficult, trying to give the group a sense of belonging was hard. The staff team suffered early changes, yet Mrs Benson, Mrs Lynch and the majority of parents of Springfield pupils were quite certain that their children had benefited—and with reason. Only four of the seventeen pupils who went through Springfield in its first two and a half years left without a job to go to. Jobs found included trainee butcher, apprentice printer, trainee physiotherapist, day nursery worker, apprentice plumber in a borough with a high rate of juvenile unemployment. For a number there was substantial personal change too. Mrs Benson said: 'After Raymond started going to Springfield even his very behaviour was better than when he was at Wayford school . . . I would never send little one [her grandson] to that school.' In the short-term, then, off-site centres do provide a solution, both for schools harassed by disruption and for the pupils they find uncontainable.
>
> For education authorities aware, as the ILEA undoubtedly is, of the threat posed by off-site centres to the ideal of comprehensive education, there is a possible justification for their existence—that they will become progressively less necessary. Relieved of the demoralizing and time-consuming pressure exerted by their most 'hopeless' cases, school should have more energy to give to the task of solving problems of disruption before they become hopeless. If the skills and insights gained by teachers in off-site units are fully available to teachers in school, there should be greater expertise within the schools. The

needs of those most likely to become involved in dynamics of escalating violence may be met before the negative roles become irreversible.

It's a justification I might like to believe, but can't. I find it incredible because, in its basic assumptions, it fails to acknowledge the likely school response to the intended programme of out-of-school provision, which will be, to put it crudely, out of sight, out of mind. To assume that this response will be widespread is not an example of cynicism about the teaching profession. It's merely that teachers *do* respond as people, not as personifications of educational ideology. If a problem, in the shape of an aggressive teenager, is physically removed and provided for elsewhere, there will, inevitably, be a powerful temptation for the teachers previously involved to assume that serious disruption is no longer, thankfully, their problem. Those schools which use off-site provision most, those with the highest incidence of reported disruption, will certainly feel they have plenty of other urgent problems to attend to. There will be little incentive for these schools to spare time to listen to feedback, or to undertake changes in their structure and curriculum which may appear only to *add* to their burden of work.

It has been the principal contention of this book that disruptive behaviour is the result of an *interaction* between child, family and school. Any provision, whether on or off-site, which does not have, built into its organization, the principle that *all* parties involved should modify their future behaviour, is, for me, no long-term solution at all. For the schools which shed their disruptive minority, but continue unchanged—with the same problems of poor staff support, of inconsistent discipline, of low pupil-teacher respect, of irrelevant curriculum—off-site provision will be little better than a dose of pain-killer. There will be nothing to prevent the growth of a new generation of disruptors.

The setting up of specialist units for disruptive pupils does not represent a new departure in the deployment of educational resources. It falls into line with a strong and long-established trend in education. Over the years the areas of education consigned to specialists have grown. In some areas specialist skills have become an integrated part of state education. But in other areas, and I would argue too many areas, specialisms have developed outside the school structure: the school is supported by having problems taken away—by social workers, by the teachers of the maladjusted, by educational psychologists. The range of behaviour which the front-line teacher is expected and feels able to handle, diminishes. The more aware education authorities become of the diversity of needs to be met in school, the greater the pressure will be on the ideal of the single comprehensive school. By allowing the continued development of plural provision outside the main school structure, local authorities are in grave danger of making a mockery of their professed belief in the equal status of all pupils. However much the Inner London Education Authority might protest when off-site units are dubbed 'sin-bins' by the press, the implication is still there. The existence of these detached alternatives to school *does* imply the recognition of a new category of disadvantage, of abnormality.

This is why I believe that, in the future, the main effort has got to be directed back to the starting-point for the problem of disruption—the school itself.

(Grunsell, 1980, pp. 116–18)

5 *Determinism and determination*

5.1 This unit has looked at how physical and biological circumstances are created, transformed and given meaning within a social context, and, in the course of this process, how 'handicaps' and 'special needs' become defined. It may seem as if this definition is tightly determined; that at any point in time political and economic factors operate which place strict limits on the way institutions can function and how people can behave within them. If this is true, the numbers and nature of handicapped people and the education provided for them is beyond human control; these are social facts fixed by structural features of society subject only to the changing influence of the 'laws' of history. In these circumstances special education would certainly be a case of the blind leading the blind.

This picture of society, and hence education, as a diabolical machine careering beyond human control, is conveyed perfectly by Emile Zola in *La Bête Humaine* in his use of the metaphor of the driverless train ominously carrying soldiers into battle:

> Now out of control, the engine tore on and on. At last the restive, temperamental creature could give full rein to her youthful high spirits, like a still-untamed steed that had escaped from its trainer's hands and was galloping off across country. The boiler was full of water, the newly stoked furnace was white-hot, and for the first half-hour pressure went up wildly and the speed became terrifying. The front guard had presumably succumbed to exhaustion and gone to sleep. The soldiers, whose drunkenness was getting worse through their being so tightly packed, suddenly saw the funny side of this mad race and sang louder than ever. They went through Maromme like a rocket. No more whistling before signals or through stations, just the all-out gallop of an animal charging head down and silent between obstacles. The engine ran on and on as though lashed to madness by the strident sound of her own breath. . . .
>
> What did the victims matter that the machine destroyed on its way? Wasn't it bound for the future, heedless of spilt blood? With no human hand to guide it through the night, it roared on and on, a blind and deaf beast let loose amid death and destruction, laden with cannon-fodder, these soldiers already silly with fatigue, drunk and bawling.

5.2 But it is the assumption and presumption of this course that educational processes can be redirected, that the lives of children in schools can be transformed. Handicap, then, is not only physical and social but also personal. We have freedom to direct and change our lives and to interpret our circumstances and our bodies to ourselves and others. Helen Keller's determination to learn about and experience the world uncovered by her teacher has created a fable of our times, a story of the triumph of will over circumstance. It is a story carefully fitted to the supreme ideology of the US; if a deaf-blind child can rise from grunts to a university education and lecture tours, what, but lack of bootstraps, can be holding back the rest of us?

5.3 William Stern was the first person to employ the notion of the IQ. The idea of a fixed general ability which a person carried like a life sentence to determine their capacity for thought and experience was later repudiated by him. He saw his involvement in such ideas as a personal aberration and became absorbed by the power and involvement of individuals in shaping their own destinies. He heard of Helen Keller's story in Germany where he lived and became so fascinated by it that he produced a book about her, illuminating her life with his particular conception of personal psychology. When he fled from Germany to the US, he discovered that ideas about IQ had become such a cherished part of psychological orthodoxy that his repudiation had no impact and was in fact treated dismissively.

5.4 However, Helen Keller was well aware of the limited part her own will had played in her rise from untutored obscurity. She at least came from a family with sufficient means to employ a private tutor. She knew too of the social limitations imposed on people in her position. While it may have been said that anyone could become President of the United States of America, the job was in fact never undertaken by a woman or a black person or a poor person. I am grateful to John Quick for pointing out the other side of the story of Helen Keller, her involvement and concern with the position of women in American society and with the rights of other oppressed groups.

5.5 What we can achieve by our own efforts is bounded by our own capacities and circumstances. The arena within which we can act as individuals is only man- or woman- or child-sized and we can only vary it in accordance with the powers and techniques—the aides—we can muster. But there are ways of extending our powers which are masked by the belief (or ideology) that our personal achievements can only be accomplished on our own. Our actions can be magnified in more than a simple arithmetical way if we join forces with others of like minds. This is the basis of the power of pressure groups formed by handicapped people who have an essential role in shaping the future course of special education. It was the discovery or rediscovery Merry (1981) made when she committed herself to the women's movement. Merry was born without her left hip joint, but despite medical predictions was able to walk with an adapted shoe and later with a full-length caliper, and managed to be active in sport: tennis and swimming. Her feeling of disability did not dawn on her until she was in her teens:

Although my leg was deformed from birth, I can't say I was disabled, or handicapped until my teens, when I began to find my activities limited by back pain, caused by the caliper which forced a curve on my spine. Anyway, plenty must have sunk in by then about my status in society, because when, as a sixth-former, I ran a club for people who were disabled, I used to rush about efficiently, trying to appear as different as I possibly could from the club members, and as similar as possible to the able-bodied helpers! Many years later, whilst lying on my back trying to recover from the results of wearing the caliper all those years, I began to think about how much of the language used about us (who are disabled) is negative. Youngsters would look at me and ask, 'What's WRONG with that lady's leg?' and parents (if they didn't shut the child up and rush away guiltily) would reply, 'She's got a BAD leg.' Not, anyway, the most instructive answer! People talk of us as invalids—in-valid! Well, no one was ever going to call me that again and get away with it! Slowly I realized what had happened to me; how I had been condescended to and treated according to people's stereotypes about what I ought to be like; how my leg had so often been politely ignored. I began to see how much energy had to be spent on preventing people from making me look as normal as possible (i.e. as able-bodied as possible). Even more slowly I began to see how, all my life, I had worked hard at being 'well adjusted' and making sure that that was how others saw me. And it started to become clear what that meant. It meant smiling when I was in pain and reassuring whoever I was with. It meant only discussing my leg if I could find something funny to tell about it. It meant accepting whatever the doctors did to me (psychologically as well as physically) with unquestioning courage. All in all it meant being very untrue to myself . . .

Then suddenly the system's role became clear too. I saw that WE are an oppressed group, like people who are black, women and so on; that segregated and sub-standard education, a physical environment that does not take our needs into account, job discrimination, housing discrimination, lack of aids and services and the threat or actuality of institutionalization keep us dependent and always ready to please. To justify this treatment, people are taught, through the media for example, to view us in certain rigid and negative ways—as stupid, unable to look after ourselves, uninterested in the world and so on, and so on.

This helped me to understand more about my behaviour, by seeing how I'd taken in so many of these oppressive ideas and values. I'd behaved the way I did in the club because I had learnt to look down on other people who were disabled unless they too acted 'normally'. Even more, I was scared of being categorized like them and therefore treated like them, by the able-bodied. I had this strange desire for respect! Somehow, at least a little of my humanness remained intact in relation to others who are disabled because I made firm friends with another woman who was visibly disabled, who helped run the same club. Somehow, deep down, I'm sure we always know what's right. Anyway, now I laugh when I remember how I used to walk faster if I saw another person on crutches, trying to prove I wasn't as feeble as they were! That's the in-group competitiveness that oppression breeds, just like women trying to be more attractive than the others . . .

I'm doing what I can to change the system that relegated us to dependency. To that end I've joined the Liberation Network of People with Disabilities. We've still got a lot to learn, but we've already got a lot to offer and a lot to teach. Over the last few months I've made lots of close friends with people who are disabled and know a friendship with them quite unlike my friendships with the able-bodied. Some of the other women who've written pieces for this book are people I love dearly and share with so much. We understand a great deal without need for words. We can be human with each other about things that the able-bodied are usually too impatient to wait for or too bound up in only one way of experiencing things to appreciate. We laugh helplessly together, cry together and are highly committed to each other. We know that when we are fighting to get things right for everyone in our oppressed group, we are fighting for each other, and when we are fighting for each other, we are fighting for everyone.

(Merry, 1981, pp. 29–32)

Appendix 1

Becoming mentally handicapped

It is not my purpose to attack the clinical perspective on subnormality; though I do want to suggest that sociologists for their part have been too ready to assume that the way subnormality is represented by clinicians corresponds to how it appears to the families of mentally handicapped children and to others in their wider social circle. I aim to show that becoming a mentally handicapped person is not just a matter of clinical evaluation and diagnosis; that it is a social process which can be understood in terms of the changing meanings given by parents to their child's behaviour and revealed in the way they act and feel towards him. From this point of view mental handicap is forged, by the families of retarded children, from their experience of living together.

Clinical and sociological perspectives

This aim runs contrary to the well-established idea—seldom questioned and rarely articulated—that the way the mentally handicapped are treated and the way they behave can be explained as a social effect of their retardation; or, put another way, that to cite the diagnosis is to satisfactorily account for differences in their behaviour or in the way others behave towards them. If mentally handicapped people are by convention and custom treated differently in society, so the assumption goes, then this is quite simply because they are fundamentally different in nature; and if the balance between personal independence and reliance on others, autonomy and compliance in social relations, or the social esteem and stigma by which they are held in respect differs in scale or degree to that granted to others, then this is because they are naturally different in their intellectual capactities and social capabilities.

This perspective—which I shall call the clinical perspective—views subnormality as a fixed attribute of the person that intrudes uniformly on all aspects of living; a brand, as it were, which a person carries with him as an indelible mark of his singularity . . .

In more general terms the clinical perspective, which interprets social artlessness or incompetence as symptomatic of individual pathology, and which accounts for the realities of discrimination and prejudice they encounter in terms of the facts of their disability and their deficiency of skills, is inadequate for explaining the social roles which mentally handicapped people are allocated and the status ascribed to them in the private world of close personal relationships where they figure as individuals rather than cyphers. It prompts us to focus too exclusively on the important but narrow band of characteristics they share as a result of their common membership of that class of people we label 'subnormal' at the expense of appreciating the distinctive qualities and accomplishments that distinguish them as individuals. If we are to try to understand what it means to be subnormal in social as well as in biological terms then we have to show how the difference identified in diagnosis is realized and sustained in the daily lives of mentally handicapped people.

This task entails that we recognize two things. First, that the salience with which the handicap features as an aspect of a person's identity and the degree to which it pervades their performance of social roles does not hinge merely on the gravity of impairment but on the significance that is attached to it by the handicapped person and those with whom he associates. Second, that the way in which the handicap is revealed, its conspicuousness and the appearance it assumes may change on different occasions in different places at different times.

Unlike its clinical counterpart, which can be said to exist regardless of whether a person thinks of himself as retarded or whether others treat him as someone who is retarded, subnormality as a social state is created and shaped by human activity. It is framed precisely by the way in which the social behaviour of the mentally handicapped and the treatment they are accorded differentiates them from their peers and contemporaries. From this standpoint, the task of describing subnormality in its social form is equivalent to the task of describing the social meanings that are imputed to the clinical diagnosis.

This sociological perspective is based on two notions which together present another aspect of the reality of mental handicap:

- First, it focuses on the origins and unfolding of the social meanings attributed to subnormality. In this sense, the sociologist is interested in the idea of subnormality rather than, as the clinician, in the condition it denotes. The task is to find out how people conceive of subnormality who have no knowledge of its pathology; in other words, how they apprehend what it means to say of someone that he is subnormal.
- Second, it holds that subnormality is given form as a social state as distinct from a clinical category precisely by the way in which the social behaviour of the mentally handicapped and the way others act towards them breaks the rules and understandings which ordinarily govern our social conduct and isolates them as being in some way odd, aberrant or different. In other words, the sociologist sees subnormality as constituted from just those modes of behaving which the clinician would explain as a symptom or effect of severe retardation.

From this point of view, then, subnormality is a quality of relationships between people which is disclosed in the way mentally handicapped people fail to live up to the claims and expectations which are made and held of their contemporaries and reaffirmed by the allowances and adjustments which others feel compelled to make in the way they manage their relations with them. It follows that subnormality, as a socially defined role, may assume many forms and take on many guises—irrespective of the severity of an individuals' handicap—depending on the sort of concessions and compensations which people feel they have to make, when mixing with mentally handicapped people, in the way they customarily behave towards socially competent others in like situations.

(Booth, 1978, pp. 204–7)

Appendix 2

A provocative case of over-achievement by a mongoloid

E was born on 1 January, 1924. The birth was by Caesarian section because his mother suffered from a severe deformity of the pelvis. E weighed 7 lbs 12 oz at birth and was regarded as being physically normal. E was first examined psychologically in 1936 when he was 12–1. At that time, the Connecticut State Board of Education reported that E had a 1916 Standford-Binet MA of 4–4 and IQ of 36. It was the examiner's impression that E was a 'typical mongolian idiot . . . Vision very poor . . . Speech defective . . . Very short span of attention . . . Hyperactive . . . Immature . . . Extremely dependent upon mother.' It was also reported that E's mother was 'very much attached to the patient; would not consider committing him to an institution; spends a great deal of time tutoring him and training him in good habits.' On the basis of this report, E was excluded from the public schools and institution authorities were told of his status.

In July, 1948, when E was 24, he was referred to the New Haven Vocational Service by his mother's physician 'for the purpose of determining whether he could be made employable and in what area.' Testing there revealed a mental age 'definitely below six years on the Stanford-Binet (L) supported by performance on selected sections of the Wechsler-Bellvue Scale (Form I)."

From 1951 to his admission to the institution in 1960, E was visited regularly at his mother's home by social workers from the state institution for the mentally retarded. The remainder of his history is drawn from the written reports of these social workers.

June, 1951: E 'is eager to help around the house and to do errands for the neighbors. He can go to a self-service store by himself. He goes into the center of New Haven (population 150,000) by himself and goes around on various errands for his mother, such as paying the gas and electric bills. Patient is immaculately clean and is able to care for all of his personal needs.'

May, 1952: E and his mother 'played a (piano) duet for the worker.' E's mother is teaching him 'to play the piano and he does this very well.'

January, 1956: E's mother has been in a hospital for six months recovering from a heart attack. (For the remaining four years of her life E's mother was unable to do any physical

work about the house.) E 'now does all of the housework. He does the washing and ironing, vacuums, makes beds, washes the floors and windows, takes out the rubbish, runs all of the errands and pays all of the bills . . . All Mrs E does is a little cooking and baking.'

August, 1956: 'For spare money, E makes potholders which he sells to friends; he is also selling Christmas cards and ball point pens.'

April, 1957: When worker arrived E 'was sitting at the table writing and he immediately got up and spoke with the worker and was very polite . . . He showed the worker some of his writings and he is able to write quite legibly . . . He also enjoys music.'

October, 1958: E 'recently had his name in the paper for finding a pocketbook with $600.00 in it on a bus and turning it in to the driver.'

January, 1959: Worker found house disrupted and workmen sealing a hole in the kitchen ceiling. Water had flooded the apartment from above. While Mrs E supervised the workmen in the kitchen, E 'came into the living room, sat down and talked with the worker . . . When the repair men left, E began to set the kitchen to rights. Later, as the worker was leaving, she noticed that E was setting up a rollaway bed which had been taken apart to dry. At this time, the worker's opinion was that 'without E's help mother would be unable to continue her mode of living.'

July, 1960: E's mother died and since there were no relatives who were able to keep him E was committed to Southbury Training School.

(Butterfield, 1961)

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